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INFLUENCE OF JUDAISM

ON THE

PROTESTANT REFORMATION;

BY

Dr. H. GRAETZ,

PROFESSOR OF HISTORY AT THE JEWISH THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY OF
BRESLAU.

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN

BY

REV. SIMON TUSKA.



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TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.

In a Lecture on Science, delivered not long since at the Royal Institution, and republished in the *Eclectic* of October, 1866, the Rev. C. Kingsley, speaking of the immense benefit mankind derived from the "brave and patient investigation of physical facts" ever since the latter part of the seventeenth century, and showing that the eighteenth century, "by boldly observing and analyzing facts," did more for the welfare of mankind "than the whole fifteen centuries before it;" goes on to say "that this boldness towards facts increased in proportion as Europe became indoctrinated with the Jewish literature; and that notably such men as Kepler, Newton, Berkely, Spinoza, Leibnitz, Descartes, in whatsoever else they differed, agreed in this; that their attitude towards nature was derived from the teachings of the Jewish sages. *I believe that we are not yet fully aware how much we owe to the Jewish mind, in the gradual emancipation of the human intellect.*" What the learned lecturer here says of the influence of the Jewish mind on the development of the human intellect in general, may, with even more propriety, be said of the influence of the Jewish mind in bringing about that great and memorable event, forming a most remarkable epoch in the history of Christianity and Christendom—the Protestant Reformation. Few indeed, if any, are aware how much Christianity is indebted to Judaism, not only for its birth eighteen centuries ago, but even for its subsequent *regeneration* in the sixteenth century. Dr. Graetz, the able and thorough Jewish historian, whose oral instructions

the translator himself has had the privilege of enjoying while pursuing his theological studies at the Seminary of Breslau, deserves the credit of being the first who has clearly and satisfactorily pointed out the hitherto hidden, yet potent influence which the literature of the Hebrews has exerted, more or less directly, on the great Reform movement. In the ninth volume of his *Geschichte der Juden*, Leipsic, 1866, the author traces, with his wonted accuracy and profound research, the events immediately preceding the Reformation; which events, though directly related to the history and literature of Israel, paved the way for that decisive change of public sentiment in reference to the authority of the Pope and the Catholic Church, ending in the establishment of the Protestant Church.

It is this part of the author's work, constituting chapters 3 to 6, inclusive, in the original, which is now presented to the English reader, the translation having been originally undertaken at the special request of the Rev. Dr. Wise, the well-known editor of *THE ISRAELITE*, in the columns of which it was first published. As regards the rendering itself, the translator would simply say that, while endeavoring to give an exact and faithful copy of the original, he has occasionally taken the liberty to abridge the narrative when the original would have appeared too prolix in an English dress, and now and then, also, embodied in the *text* the substance of what in the original is stated in the *notes*. The latter, which are quite numerous in the

original, giving the sources and quoting the original documents, from which the author drew his facts and data, have been left untranslated, since to the general reader they would be of little interest, while to the critical reader the original will no doubt be accessible. For the convenience of the English reader, the translator has divided the text into twenty-four sections, and prepared a "Table of Contents" according to the division. At the close will also be found a brief *resume* of

the entire narrative, as it closes rather abruptly in the original.

With these brief prefatory remarks, the Translator now presents these pages to the public at large, trusting that the incidents and events therein described will be of interest both to the votaries of that faith whom they originally and immediately concerned, and to the votaries of that other faith, upon whom they subsequently and indirectly exerted so great an influence.

MEMPHIS, TENN., December, 1866.

SIMON TUSKA.

INFLUENCE OF JUDAISM

ON THE

PROTESTANT REFORMATION.

SECTION I.

When we consider the moral and intellectual state of Germany at the beginning of the sixteenth century, we can not but wonder that the Protestant Reformation originated in *that* country rather than in any other Christian government. Germany was then the land of marauding knights; the scene of continual feuds for the most trifling affairs; where every man was a despot and a slave at the same time, pitilessly trampling upon his inferiors, and miserably fawning upon his superiors. The Germans themselves were a blunt, rude people, prone to drunkenness and notorious for their general stupidity. And yet, from such a land and people proceeded a great movement, that agitated Europe to its very center, changed entirely the state of political affairs, gave the death-blow to the institutions of the Middle Ages, and marked the dawn of a new historical period. The reformation of Church and State—a thing which enlightened minds were then but dreaming of—began in a country where it would have been least expected. In a government remarkable for its imbecility, where even the Emperor himself, though styled the Sovereign of the World, commanded and threatened in vain; where only the lesser tyrants, though only at brief intervals, commanded some respect—who would, in such a land, have looked for a vigorous manifestation of strength, that was to rejuvenate the nations of Europe? Truly, to the men of that age this seemed a sheer impossibility. Nevertheless, in that people there slumbered a latent power, which needed but to be aroused, to effect the rejuvenation of Europe. Among the Germans there still prevailed that simplicity of life and austerity of morals—pedantic, indeed, and even ludicrous in appearance—which characterized their early ancestors. Not so was it in the leading Romanian countries of the time—in Italy, France and Spain. In these, a false refinement, satiated lust and moral corruption had already appeared. The very rudeness and bluntness still prevailing among the Germans prevented the corrupt clergy, to a great extent, from contaminating them with the poison of their own viciousness. The lower orders of the clergy in Germany, compared with those of other European countries, were more chaste and modest. That innate appreciation of domestic life and social reunion, which characterized the Germans in common with the Israel-

ites, guarded them against that looseness of morals to which the Romanian nations had then already degenerated. Moreover, the very fact that the Germans were slow in comprehension and clumsy in thought, caused them to adhere tenaciously to their faith and to their sense of truth and justice; and thus they did not, like other nations, suffer themselves to be deprived of them by the arts of sophistry. In the cultivated circles of Rome and Italy, particularly at the Papal Court, the dogmas of Christianity were derided; the political power alone, resulting from the latter, was eagerly grasped. In Germany, where the people were little disposed to merriment, except when in their drinking saloons, they did not think lightly of Christianity, but revered it as an ideal which, once a living reality, was bound to be revived again.

But these moral germs were so deeply hidden and buried in the bosom of the German people, that, but for the aid of favorable circumstances, they would not have been brought to light to exercise their great historical influence. The *Talmud*—though the Germans themselves will not acknowledge it—has indirectly contributed much to rousing these slumbering forces. We may boldly assert, that the controversy to which the *Talmud* gave rise aroused the consciousness of the Germans, and created a *public opinion*, without which the Reformation, like many a similar attempt, would have died at its very birth—nay, more, it would never have been born. The rolling of an insignificant pebble ended in a powerful, crushing avalanche.

SECTION II.

That insignificant grain of sand, which brought about this great commotion, was an ignorant, totally degraded individual, the very scum of the Israelites—*Joseph Pfefferkorn*—a being, whose name does not deserve mention in literature and history, but whom Providence seems to have destined, like the buprestidans, to accomplish against his will a useful work.

This Joseph Pfefferkorn, a native of Moravia, was more expert in the practice of dishonesty than in the acquisition of knowledge. At the house of his uncle, Rabbi Meir Pfefferkorn, he had hastily snatched some bits of Hebrew learning, which he thought he could turn to more advantage among ignorant Christians than among his own kinsmen. Having committed one or

more thefts, he fled to avoid the impending penalty, sought refuge in the Church, and in the thirty-sixth year of his age—about 1505—was baptized, together with his wife and children, his first name being changed into *Johannes* (John). He also induced his relatives to embrace Christianity. The baptism seems to have taken place at Cologne. Here, at any rate, *Pfefferkorn* enjoyed the special favor of the ignorant, haughty and fanatical Dominicans. They seemed to have recognized in him a practicable tool, took him under their special protection, and procured for him the position of superintendent of the city hospital and surveyor of salt.

Cologne was at that time the home of a set of swaggering, vain-glorious set of men, who shunned the rays of enlightenment, and were anxious to obscure the dawn of an enlightened age with the dark clouds of superstitious ignorance. Foremost among them was a certain *Hoogstraten*, acting as grand inquisitor—a man of violence, reckless in his conduct, greedily longing for the odor of burning heretics. He banished from the city all who were in favor of a liberal education, and would have made an excellent *Torquemada* in Spain. Similar to him was a professor of Dominican theology, *Arnold de Tungern*, who had once committed a crime in his native city, and, in consequence, would fain have cast his origin into oblivion. *Ortuin de Graes* (in Latin, *Ortunius Gratus*.) was the third in the triumvirate. He was the son of a clergyman, desirous of imitating his father. He had tasted but little of the liberal arts and sciences; nevertheless, his friends and associates could not sufficiently praise him as a poet and master of the fine arts.

SECTION III.

Ortuin de Graes was filled with such burning hatred against the Jews, that zealous fanaticism alone can hardly have prompted it. He made it his special aim to excite the hatred of the Christians against them, by publishing anti-Jewish works. Too ignorant to compose such works himself, he engaged the services of converted Jews to furnish him the material requisite for such publications. A certain Israelite, who, on the occasion of some persecution, or on some other ground, had entered the pale of Christianity in the fiftieth year of his age, and assumed the name of *Victor of Karben*, was heralded as a Rabbi—though he understood but little of rabbinical literature—that the more importance might be attached to his attack on Judaism and defence of Christianity. In order to test his sincerity as a Christian, *Herrmann*, landgrave of Hesse, then Archbishop and Elector of Cologne, convened at Poppelsdorf (near Bonn) learned Hebrews of the Rhenish provinces, to hold a religious controversy with this *Victor*. This controversy was carried on in presence of many courtiers, clergymen and knights. In the course of the debate *Victor* reproached the Jews—

whether voluntarily or not, is not known—with being evil-disposed toward the Christians and with despising every thing Christian. At length the Archbishop *Herrmann* inquired what opinions the Jews entertained respecting Jesus and Mary. In response to this inquiry, the so-called baptized Rabbi accused his former brethren of the most shameful blasphemies against the latter. In consequence of this, all the Jews living in the region of the lower Rhine were banished.

It was from this *Victor of Karben* that *Ortuin Gratus* obtained all the materials requisite for bringing charges against the Jews, their Talmud, their errors and their abominations. These he published in a book entitled, “The Life and Manners of the Jews”—first written in Latin, 1504, and translated into German. The first charge preferred against the Jews reads as follows:

“They would not abandon their religion for all the treasures of the world. If even a thousand ducats were offered to the poorest one of them, to induce him to renounce his faith, or even to stoop in order to pick up something in front of a crucifix, he would decline the offer, preferring to remain in a state of indigence. Even the most ignorant among the Jews would rather be burned alive a thousand times, than confess the name of Jesus.”

And now, because this people, so often decried for their greedy avarice, would not surrender their honest convictions for money, and because this people, so generally denounced as cowards, would rather suffer the most excruciating pain of being burned alive—it was for this that *Victor of Karben*, or *Ortuin*, branded them as the worst and most corrupt people on earth. The peculiar usages of the Hebrews, as well as the rabbinical legends of the Talmud, are then ridiculed. Nor is the accusation wanting that the Jews, in their prayers, imprecate curses upon apostate Jews that have been converted to Christianity. The most original of all the false accusations, is the assertion that the Jews always instigate, by fraud and violence, the murder of apostates from Judaism—of which most horrible instances are related. The Talmud, as a matter of course, which the Jews are said to regard with more veneration than even the Decalogue, is held responsible for all the wickedness of its adherents.

SECTION IV.

But, after all, *Victor of Karben*, it seems, was either too old (he was born 1442, died 1515), or not sufficiently serviceable for the purposes of the Dominicans. This Order aimed more especially at the furtherance of a plan, by which they would become the sole judges and arbiters of heretical men and writings, and thus secure a most profitable business. But for this object they needed a Jew; their own firm having but recently fallen into extraordinary disrepute. The two Orders of Dominicans and Franciscans had at all times been deady

enemies of each other. Whatever was lauded by the one, was condemned by the other. If the Dominicans were followers of the scholastic philosophy of Thomas Aquinas, calling themselves *Thomists*, then the Franciscans would embrace the scholastic theology of some other patron of learning, such as Scotius or Occam. The Franciscans advocated, for instance, the dogma that not merely Jesus, but also his mother, was born immaculate of a virgin mother. In opposition to this, the Dominicans strongly contended against the immaculate conception of Mary. This controversy was carried on with a spirit of extraordinary animosity at the beginning of the sixteenth century. The Dominicans endeavored to prove their view by miracles. For this purpose they obtained the services of a journeyman tailor, admitting him into their Order. This tailor was at first a willing tool in their hands, declaring at their instance that he held nightly conversation with Mary, and heard from her own lips that her conception was not immaculate. At last this tailor betrayed the fraud of the Dominicans; in consequence of which the prior, sub-prior and two other persons of rank belonging to this Order were burned as heretics. The Franciscans did not fail to avail themselves of the favorable opportunity of spreading, by means of popular works written in German and Latin, the knowledge of the disgrace of their opponents, thereby rendering their rival Order odious in the eyes of the public. It was on this account that the Dominicans dared not, in their own name, to agitate against the Jews, but stimulated the baptized Pfefferkorn to do so.

Pfefferkorn was peculiarly pliable and serviceable. He lent his name to another anti-Jewish work, which, again, Ortuin Gratius first composed in Latin. The work was entitled, "A Mirror for Reflection," and was published first in Nuremberg, 1507, and in the following year in Cologne. In this book he exhorted the Jews to repent. In this, the first anti-Jewish work published under Pfefferkorn's name, the Jews are, as yet, treated in a friendly manner. The author flatters them not a little, and even takes the trouble to declare as untrue and calumnious the charges, so frequently preferred against them, of stealing and murdering Christian children. He further begs the Christians not to banish the Jews, they having hitherto continually been driven from one exile to another; nor to impose upon them any too intolerable burdens, as they, too, are in some measure human beings. But this friendly manner was only assumed; it was but a feeler, thrown out in order to gain ground. This "Mirror for Reflection" furthermore represents the futility of the Jewish hope of a Messiah that is to redeem them, and refers, by way of illustration, to the ignominious end of the late Messianic movement under *Asher Lammin*.* On the other hand, there were said to be a great many more conversions

of Jews to Christianity than before. This sign, taken in connection with others, pointed to a new order of things, ushering in the time of one shepherd and one flock, or—the end of the world. This pamphlet, in short, was but a mere skirmish, preparatory to a great battle against the religion and literature of the Hebrews.

The Dominicans of Cologne aimed at nothing less than the confiscation of all Talmudical works, as was the case in France in the reign of Louis the Saint. To attain this object was the distant and indirect aim of Pfefferkorn's first pamphlet; its tendency being to cast suspicion on the character of the Talmud. It reproaches the Jews—now in a tone of tender admonition, now in a spirit of malicious invective—with not acknowledging Jesus as the Lord and Messiah, and, more than this, with not revering and adoring Mary. It states three reasons for the stiff-necked, stubborn unbelief of the Jews: That they are given to usury; that they are not forced to visit the Church regularly, and that they are strongly attached to the Talmud. These were the obstacles in the way of the conversion of the Jews; and were they removed, the latter would join the Church *en masse*. Pfefferkorn therefore advises the princes and the people to interdict the usury of the Jews, to compel them to visit churches and listen to sermons, and—to burn the Talmud. He admits, indeed, the unfairness of depriving the Jews of the right to possess their own works. But inasmuch as the Christians do not hesitate to commit all sorts of violence against the Jews, oppressing them with heavy burdens and extortions of every description; and since they do all this, not from malice or avarice, but for the benefit of the Jews, to induce them to give up their unbelief, the mere confiscation of their Talmudical works was, comparatively speaking, an innocent thing. This alone was the main object of the work that appeared under Pfefferkorn's name.

The general opinion then prevailing far and wide in Germany was, that the Dominican monks of Cologne were in partnership with Pfefferkorn, endeavoring to turn the confiscation of the Talmud to their own pecuniary advantage. The German Jews, it was well known, would be willing to make any amount of pecuniary sacrifices rather than be without that sacred code—the Talmud. If now, thought the Dominicans, the civil magistrates could be induced to confiscate all existing copies of

*This religious enthusiast, a German by birth, pretended to be the forerunner of the Messiah in 15 2. He claimed that if the Israelites would practice rigid penitence, self-denial and benevolence, they would be redeemed from all their sufferings and restored to Jerusalem in less than a year. The people, particularly in Germany and Italy, prepared for such extraordinary events by the cabalistic vagaries of the times, followed his advice, sanguine of realizing their expectations. But the supposed forerunner of the Messiah suddenly died, and, of course, the delusion was at an end. It was in consequence of this, no doubt, as the author rightly conjectures, that many an Israelite, disappointed in his sanguine hopes of final redemption, sought salvation in the Church.—TRANSLATOR.

that work, they (the Dominicans), being the legal inquisitors, would have them at their own disposal, and then the Jews would make them the most liberal offers to revoke the act of confiscation. That such were their selfish motives is most graphically described in the letters of the celebrated *Reuchlin* and others published at the time. To accomplish this, their desire, they again, in the following year, used the name of Pfefferkorn in the publication of a work, called "*The Jewish Confession*," (1508). In this work they spoke even more invidiously of the Talmud, ridiculed the religious rites and ceremonies of the Hebrews, charged them with making confession to fish and poultry and then devouring their confessors. The Christians are warned against associating with the Jews, "these being more dangerous beings than the devil himself." The Jews are characterized as being bloodhounds that live upon the sweat and blood of the Christians. It was, therefore, the duty of the rulers to banish the Jews; they having been long since driven out of many countries—France, Spain and Denmark—and but recently from Nuremberg also. What harm, asks the author, what disadvantage have the Christians experienced in consequence? "By rights ye should follow their example for the salvation of your souls!" The magistrates at least ought to prohibit them from trafficking with money and compel them to work and visit the churches. The thought which recurs most repeatedly in this venomous little book is, of course, that the obduracy of the Jews is to be attributed solely to their rabbinical writings, these treating the Christian church with contempt. It is somewhat singular that Pfefferkorn deems it necessary to chastise his own associates also—the baptized Jews. "Many a wicked Jew," he says, "is found running into some country and becoming a Christian, not from conviction, but in order to gain money, to enjoy the pleasures and luxuries of life, and turn his art to better advantage. At last these baptized Jews return to their former brethren, saying: 'I will no longer be a Christian.' And even though some of them remain with the Christians, yet in secret they adhere to their former faith." Pfefferkorn's object in this was, perhaps, to meet in advance the objections that might be made against his odious insinuations by other baptized Jews. He has himself, at all events, occasioned the sincerity of his belief to be called into question.

Not long afterward (in February, 1509) Pfefferkorn again published a pamphlet in German on the Jewish Feast of the Passover. This work is addressed to the people and plainly incites them to use violence against the Jews. Contradicting what he said in his first work, he now brings the charge that they regard it as highly meritorious not merely to cheat, but even to kill, a Christian. It was, therefore, the duty of Christians to drive away those shabby dogs; and if the rulers were not

willing to do it, the people should take the matter in their own hands, and first petition the rulers to deprive the Jews by force of all their books, (except the Bible), and all articles pawned with them; nay, more, to take away their children and give them a Christian education, but banish into wretchedness the adults as being incorrigible rascals. It was no sin to treat the Jews ever so badly since they were not free, but belonged soul and body to the sovereign rulers; and if these would not willingly comply with the request of the people, they should assemble *en masse*, nay, create a tumult and bolsterously demand the performance of that Christian duty to the detriment of the Jews. The masses should volunteer as the chivalrous knights of Christ, and execute his will. Whoever injured the Jews was a member of Christ; but whoever favored them was even worse than they, and would be condemned to everlasting woe and infernal punishment.

But Pfefferkorn, Ortuin Gratius, and the Jew-haters of Cologne were, after all, somewhat behind the age. Though the Jews were still hated and despised as much as in the time of the crusades and the "black plague," yet the time for inciting the populace to a general slaughter of the Jews had passed. Still less could the rulers be prevailed on to banish their Hebrew subjects, since with these they would have lost a never failing source of large revenues. Nor were the people as zealous as formerly in converting the Jews; on the contrary, many a Christian pointed with scorn and contempt at baptized Jews. A popular proverb of the day well expresses the opinion with which these were generally regarded: "A baptized Jew resembles clean linen. As long as it is new, it delights the eye; but when used a few days, it is put away and thrown into the basket. Even so it is with a converted Jew—directly after the baptism he is patted and caressed by the Christians; but after the lapse of a few days, he is neglected, avoided, excluded and even despised."

The Jews of Germany, apprehending new dangers from the zeal and fanaticism of Pfefferkorn, tried as much as possible to counteract his efforts. Jewish physicians, who, as a general thing, were great favorites with the ruling princes, seem to have availed themselves of their personal influence, and rendered the accusations of Pfefferkorn harmless, proving them to be sheer fabrications. Christians even were indignant at the base agitations of the converted Jew, and boldly denounced him as a hypocrite and scoundrel, unworthy of belief. He only desired, they thought, to impose on the minds of the ignorant, his only care being to fill his purse; having accomplished which, he would all of a sudden disappear, and either return to the pale of Judaism, or seek some other scene of action, where he might, under a different name, derive additional profit by being baptized over again. This induced him to issue another pamphlet immediately there-

after (March, 1509), the tendency of which was plainly indicated by its title: "*The Enemy of the Jews.*" He dedicated it to the anti-Jewish prince, Phillip of Cologne, adjuring him to defend him against the Jews whom he charged with plotting against his life. He repeated in this most virulent invective all the accusations made against the Jews in his previous works, and presented plain and palpable proof of their impoverishing the Christians by means of compound interest. He defamed the Jewish physicians, declaring them to be mere quacks, in whose hands the life of a Christian patient must needs be endangered. It was, therefore, necessary, said he, to exile the Jews, as the Emperor Maximilian did in Austria, Styria and Carinthia. They were at least to be prohibited lending money on interest, and be coerced to engage in manual labor, not indeed in noble and honorable branches of industry, but in low, dirty, disgraceful work—such as cleaning streets, sweeping chimneys, hauling away all kinds of filth and offal, and acting in general as scavengers and the like. The author more especially advises that all copies of the Talmud and every other work relating to the Jewish religion, excepting the Bible, should be taken away from them, and that strict search should be made for that purpose in all their households; nay, the torture was to be applied by way of compelling them to give up all such books. In the composition of this work, also, Ortiun Gratus, the master of the fine arts, had a hand. He translated it into Latin, prefacing the same with a poorly written epigram on the stubbornness, inflexibility and wickedness of the Jewish race.

But all these virulent pamphlets, in both Latin and German, were only the means and preparations for carrying out a general plan of the Dominicans of Cologne, namely, to prepare an *auto-da-fe* for the religious works of the Hebrews or make them a source of revenue. They had an eye to the Emperor Maximilian. They desired to importune him, who would not easily be persuaded to encourage violence, to lend his hand to an act of oppression, by which the Jews with all their writings and treasures would become subject to the arbitrary control of the Dominican Order. For this purpose they availed themselves of the bigotry of an unhappy prince.

SECTION V.

The beautiful sister of Maximilian, Kunigunde, the favorite daughter of Frederic III., whose hand had been eagerly coveted by mighty kings and princes, had in her youth caused her aged father much grief and sorrow.

Without her father's knowledge she married his open enemy, Albrecht of Munich, the Duke of Bavaria, of whose growing power he was exceedingly jealous; the latter having but recently wrested from the imperial domain the important city of Ratisbon. More than this: Kunigunde her-

self contributed to the aggrandizement of Bavaria, having brought as her dowry the provinces of Tyrol and Western Austria. For a long time the deeply grieved father would not bear the mention of her very name. The animosity existing between Frederic and his hostile son-in-law resulted even in an open war checked only in its baneful course by the prudence of Maximilian. The latter at last succeeded, also, in bringing about a reconciliation between the Emperor and his daughter. When duke Albrecht died in the vigor of manhood (1508), Kunigunde, soon after her husband's burial, prompted perhaps by feelings of regret for the errors of her youth, exchanged the elegant apartments of the ducal palace for the humble convent of the Franciscans in Munich. She was made abbess of the Clarissians, and mortified her flesh. The Dominicans of Cologne now speculated upon the co-operation of this princess, whose mind could be easily influenced within the walls of the bigoted cloister. They provided Pfefferkorn with letters of recommendation to Kunigunde. He was to represent to her, with a venomous tongue, the shameful conduct of the Jews, their blasphemies against Jesus, Mary, the apostles and the church. He was furthermore to dwell upon the fact that the Jewish writings contained all these shameful utterances, and intimate the propriety of abolishing such works. The Dominicans of Cologne were correct in their calculation, that a charge, uttered by one who was of Jewish descent against his own brethren-in-faith, would have more weight than if the same were preferred by Christians. And then they thought, how easy it is to persuade a woman—and that, one whose mind had become obscured by bigotry and superstition in a gloomy convent. Kunigunde gave more credence to the calumnies uttered against the Jews and their writings, coming as they did from a man who had himself been once a Jew, who, as such, must have been well acquainted with their habits and opinions; particularly, as he assured her that with the destruction of the Talmud all the Jews would gradually embrace Christianity.

Pfefferkorn easily obtained what he desired from the bigoted nun. She furnished him with a letter to her imperial brother, earnestly conjuring the latter to put a stop to the blasphemies of the Jews against Christianity, and issue a decree ordering all their writings, the Bible excepted, to be taken away from them and burned; lest the sins of blasphemy, which are daily committed by the Jews, fall upon his own crowned head. With this letter in hand, Pfefferkorn went forthwith to Italy, where the Emperor was then encamped in his expedition against the Venetians.

By dint of Kunigunde's fanatical letter, his own verbal calumniations, Pfefferkorn succeeded in extorting from Maximilian, who was then too much occupied with martial and diplomatic complications to be able to take the subject into proper considera-

tion, a mandate (dated August 19, 1509), in which he conferred upon the baptized villain full powers to act in the matter. He was to have the right to examine all Jewish writings in the German realm, and to destroy all those which were antagonistic to the Bible and the Christian religion; the priests of the place, however, and two city counsellors were to be present. The Jews were strongly warned, under pain of severe punishments, to offer no resistance, but cheerfully submit their books to Pfefferkorn's investigation.

Triumphantly Pfefferkorn hastened back to Germany, with the imperial power of attorney, which made him master of the Jews, in order to hunt after their literature, or rather their purses. He began to exercise the functions of his office, which promised to become exceedingly profitable, in the city of Frankfurt—at that time the seat of the largest Jewish congregation in Germany, where many persons versed in the Talmud resided, and where consequently many copies of the latter, as well as many rich Israelites, existed. At the instance of Pfefferkorn, the city council called all the Jews together in the synagogue, and there made known to them the command of the Emperor to deliver up their writings. The Jewish community protested, indeed, and here and there offered some resistance; still they were deprived not merely of the Talmud, but all other works, Pfefferkorn pretending to be under the necessity of examining them all, in order to find out whether they contained any thing against Christianity.

The Israelites, however, were not thus easily to be entrapped. There lived, even at that age, intelligent and equitable Christians, who boldly declared their disapproval of a mode of proceedings so unjust in itself, and intended only to gratify the avarice of a few miscreants. Others, again, won by the gold of the Jews, were ready to espouse their cause. With their assistance, the Israelites called on the Emperor, remonstrating that Pfefferkorn was an ignorant man, incompetent to judge in the matter, and that his proceedings were an indirect violation of the time-honored privileges granted to them, prominent among which was freedom of conscience, which must needs include the reading and keeping of religious works.

The decision of the Emperor was not yet made public, when the Elector and Archbishop of Mayence, also, *Uriel of Gemmingen*—whether from good will to the Jews or from jealous regard of authority in his diocese, is not known—interfered with the confiscation of Hebrew literature. He summoned Pfefferkorn to appear at Ashaffenburg, and intimated to him that the mandate he had obtained from the Emperor labored under a formal defect, in that it appointed him alone as arbiter, thereby making him at once accuser, witness and judge; and that, consequently, the Jews had good reason to protest against its validity. He therefore advised Pfefferkorn to

repair once more to the Emperor, for the purpose of having the imperial decree made more complete. In this interview, the name of *Reuchlin* was, for the first time, casually mentioned in connection with the question at issue; but whether his name was first mentioned by Pfefferkorn or the Archbishop, is not known. They considered the propriety of requesting the Emperor to appoint Reuchlin (and also Victor de Karben) to act conjointly with Pfefferkorn, as judges on the writings of the Jews. The officious convert forthwith girt his loins and set out on a second journey to the Emperor. No doubt he first informed his patrons, the Dominicans of Cologne, of his undertaking, and obtained from them fresh letters of introduction to the Emperor. With their consent, Pfefferkorn was to suggest to the Emperor the best Hebrew scholar among the Christians to be appointed assistant judge in the case at issue. With all their extremely sagacious calculations, these arch-enemies of the Jews committed a blunder, which rendered the victory they had already obtained exceedingly precarious. They thought it necessary to secure the assistance of a man, whose learning, character and high rank would contribute much to the furtherance of their design. *Reuchlin*, the pride of Germany, was to become their coadjutor, in order to disarm in advance all opponents that might rise against their wicked intentions. Their aim was also said to be to cause this man of learning, whom the advocates of ignorance regarded with a jealous eye for having been the first to stimulate the study of the Hebrew language in Germany, and, in fact, in Europe at large, to commit himself in one way or another.* But it was by means of these very devices that Pfefferkorn and his leaders utterly frustrated their cause; nay, more, they raised a storm, which, in less than a decennium, shook the very foundation of the Catholic Church. It was justly said afterward, by Erasmus,† that the semi-Jewish Christian did more injury to Christianity than all the writings of the Jews. John Reuchlin is one of those who assisted in the transition of the Middle Ages to modern times, and in consequence rendered his name illustrious in the annals of the sixteenth century. But he deserves a bright page in the annals of Jewish history, also.

SECTION VI.

John Reuchlin, of Pforzheim, (born 1455, died 1522,) or *Caprio*—as he was called in Greek by his admiring friends of the humanities—together with his younger contemporary *Erasmus*, has divested Germany of the reproach of barbarism, and, by their example and widely extended influence,

* *Erasmus* vs. *Hoogstraten*, quoted by VON DER HARDT, II, p. 8.

† *Ad Reuchlin in Epistolæ Clarorum Virorum*, II, p. 26: "Plus unus ille Semijudeus Christianis nocuit rei Christianæ, quam universa Judæorum sentina."

proved to the world that, in the knowledge of the classical languages, in elegance of style and liberal education in general, the Germans could vie with and even excel the Italians, then the sole cultivators of that department. Beside his stupendous learning, his comprehensive knowledge of the Greek and Latin literature and his elegant style, Reuchlin possessed a noble, excellent character, a generous disposition, a sense of justice that resisted all temptation, an admirable love of truth, and a heart so tender as made him the most sympathizing, self-sacrificing friend in need. In this respect there were few to compare with Reuchlin in his time; and had he, in addition to all his excellencies, possessed Hutten's intrepidity, and more clearness of intellectual vision, he would have been more fitted for a reformer of the Church and society than even Luther himself. With more versatility of genius than Erasmus, his younger associate in the promotion of a liberal and aesthetic education in Germany, Reuchlin also devoted himself to the study of the Hebrew, that he might, in the knowledge of this sacred tongue, equal his ancient prototype, St. Jerome. True, he had no opportunity to acquire a thorough knowledge of the Hebrew in Germany or in France. The Jews of Germany knew too little of their ancient vernacular themselves, to be able to instruct a Christian desirous of learning the same. Reuchlin's teacher, *Wessel* in Basle, who inspired him with love for this language, could not teach him more than the mere rudiments of the same. His love of the Hebrew rose even to enthusiasm, when, on his second journey to Rome (in the early part of 1490), he became acquainted with that learned youth, the admiration of Italy, *Pico de Mirandola*, from whom he heard of the deep, wonderful mysteries hidden in the Hebrew sources of the Cabalah. Ever since that time Reuchlin literally thirsted for a knowledge of the Hebrew literature. But he could not quench his thirst; he could not even obtain a printed copy of the Hebrew Bible. On his return to Germany, Reuchlin, then a counsellor of the Duke of Wurtemberg, applied to *Jacob Margoles*, rabbi in Nuremberg, requesting the latter to supply him with certain Cabalistic works. The aged rabbi, in response, regretted his inability to do so, as none were to be had at Nuremberg—at the same time, however, politely advising him not to engage in a study so mysterious and obscure, and more productive of evil than good.

It was only at a more mature age that Reuchlin succeeded in being more deeply initiated in the knowledge of the Hebrew language. While sojourning in Lintz, at the court of the aged Emperor Frederic III, whom he visited in company with his lord, Duke *Eberhard*, he made the acquaintance of the physician of the imperial court, the Jewish knight, *Jacob Loans*. This learned scholar instructed him properly in the Hebrew language and literature. Every hour of leisure, which Reuchlin could snatch

from his engagements at the court, he devoted to his favorite study; and so diligently did he pursue the same, that he was soon able to be his own teacher, his genius for languages greatly aiding him in mastering its difficulties. At the instance of Loan, the gray-haired Emperor, shortly before his death, presented the talented linguist with a costly Hebrew Bible, valued at more than three hundred ducats. Ever since then a most intimate relation existed between the Jewish teacher and his Christian pupil. Reuchlin always spoke of him as "*his Loans*."

Reuchlin soon sought to turn to good account the Hebrew learning which he had acquired with so much zeal. He composed a little work—*Capuion sine de verbo mirifico*, 1494—which is a most eloquent eulogy on the simplicity, depth and divinity of the Hebrew language. "The language of the Hebrews," he states, "is simple, pure, holy, brief and concise: in which God conversed with man, and men with angels, face to face, direct, and without any interpreter; not through the roaring of the Castalian fountain or Typhonian cave, nor through the rustling of the Dodonian forest or the vapors of the Delphic tripod, but as a friend is wont to speak to another." An Israelite, prepossessed in favor of Hebrew antiquities, could not have spoken of them with more enthusiasm.

This work, which Reuchlin dedicated to *Dalberg*, Bishop of Worms, is written in the form of a dialogue between an Epicurean philosopher, a Jewish sage, (*Baruchius*), and a Christian (*Capnio*), who had met together in Pforzheim, the birth-place of Reuchlin. It is designed to prove that the wisdom of all the nations, the symbols of the heathen religion, their rites and ceremonies, are nothing but disguised, deformed representations of the Hebrew truth, which is profoundly and mysteriously contained in the words, letters, nay, even in the forms of the Hebrew letters. Properly considered, this work was more intended to glorify, in beautiful Latin and with classic lore, the language of the Cabalah, thereby warmly recommending the latter to the Christian public. It was the childish interpretation, of the Cabalists, of names and letters in Sacred Scripture, which Capnio admired and applied to the dogmas of Christianity. Like the Cabalists, Reuchlin enthusiastically advocated the numerical interpretation of the letters contained in the Lord's name (the *Tetragrammaton*), the *Ten Sefirot*; and endeavored to prove all these strange vagaries by pompous quotations from the classics. He carried this mystic hallucination into Christianity. Thus, for example, he believed that the doctrine of the Trinity was intimated in the history of the creation, the three letters of the word *ברא* ("created") being the initials of the words *אב* ("father,") *בן* ("son,") and *רוח* ("ghost.")

Reuchlin must have been conscious, however, of the fact that he was still rather deficient in his knowledge of the Hebrew.

When, therefore, he acted as ambassador of the Elector of the Palatinate in Rome, at the court of Pope Alexander VI. (1498-1500), he spared no pains to improve in the study of the Hebrew literature. At that time there lived in Rome the Jewish physician, *Obadiah Sforzo*, who, besides his knowledge of the Hebrew, was also familiar with the Latin—then the knowledge of the world, in which the learned of all nations could converse with one another. This Sforzo, who subsequently wrote Hebrew Commentaries to most of the books of Sacred Scriptures, was Reuchlin's second instructor in Hebrew. He was not, indeed, a thorough critic of the Hebrew, his mind being biased by the views of the Hagadah and Cabalah; but for the purposes of Reuchlin he was fully competent. Thus we behold the German humanist, who had already attained a reputation far and wide, whose Latin orations were admired by the Italians themselves, sitting at the feet of a Jew, to finish his studies in Hebrew. Melancthon, in his life of Reuchlin, relates that the latter gave Sforzo a ducat for every lesson. Whenever Reuchlin had an opportunity of receiving instruction from an Israelite, he would not hesitate to avail himself of the same, such was the great importance he attached to the knowledge of the Hebrew. But not every Israelite, particularly in Germany—as Reuchlin himself informs us in the epilogue to his Hebrew Grammar—could be induced to instruct a Christian in the sacred tongue, inferring from a misinterpreted passage in the Talmud that it was not lawful to teach words of Holy Writ to a Gentile.

Reuchlin being thus the only Christian in Germany—nay, in all Europe—who had become familiar with the ancient language of the Hebrews, his numerous friends, anxious to satisfy the longing thirst for a knowledge of the Hebrew, which had become as popular as the Greek, urged him to publish a Hebrew Grammar, to enable students to learn the same without the assistance of Jewish teachers. And so the first Hebrew Grammar, written by a Christian, was published, (March, 1506.) The author designated it as a "monument more enduring than brass." As might well be expected from a first attempt of the kind, his grammar was deficient in many respects. It contained only so much as was absolutely necessary for a proper understanding of Hebrew orthoepy and etymology, including, besides, a brief vocabulary. But the effect which its publication produced was of great importance. It stimulated a large circle of humanists to pursue the study of Hebrew, and that with a zeal, which they afterward displayed, with great effect, in the Lutheran Reformation. Many a disciple of Reuchlin—such as *Sebastian Münster* and *Widmanstadt*—followed in his footsteps, and elevated the study of the Hebrew to the same rank as that of the Greek. The study of this Oriental language received, indeed, a new impetus from another quarter also. For it was taught

about the same time in Padua, by *Elias Levita*—the first German Jew (he was born in Neustadt, Germany,) who devoted himself to the study of this department, which his Jewish countrymen so much neglected. When, on account of the turmoils of war, he left Padua for Rome, he was taken into the house of *Egidio de Viterbo*, then Eminent Commander of the Augustinian Order, who supplied all his wants, and took lessons from him in Hebrew. But we must not overlook the circumstance that both Reuchlin and Egidio de Viterbo, who did so much in encouraging the study of the Hebrew language among the Christians, pursued this study not for its own sake, nor yet for the sake of a better understanding and more rational interpretation of the Scriptures, but solely for the purpose of being enabled to explore, with a steady eye, the depths of that mystic science—the *Cabalah*. Another Israelite, *Baruch Benvenentum*, translated, specially for Egidio, the most popular of the Cabalistic works, the *Zohar*, into Latin. In this way the Cabalah, radically opposed as it was to grammatical exegesis, paved the way, against its will, to this very branch of study.

Still it must not be supposed that Reuchlin, because he condescended to visit the Jewish quarters, in order to exhume the hidden treasures of Hebrew literature, was a particular friend of the Hebrews themselves. Like the rest of his contemporaries, he was at first strongly prejudiced against the Jewish race. Unmindful of their former splendor, and regardless of the excellent kernel contained, it is true, in a repulsive shell, he regarded them not merely as barbarians, devoid of all taste for the fine arts, but also as superstitious, degraded outcasts. In one of his earlier letters, he most solemnly asseverated that he was far from favoring the Jews; but that, following his great model, Father Jerome, he thoroughly hated them. While he was engaged with his Hebrew Grammar, he composed an epistle (1505) for a certain knight, who wished to hold religious controversies with his Jewish subjects, in which he attributed all the misfortunes of the Hebrews to their blind unbelief, instead of assigning the proper cause thereof—the uncharitable disposition of the Christians toward them. Reuchlin, no less than Pfefferkorn, charged them with blasphemy against Jesus, Mary, the Apostles and Christians generally; referring, for illustration, to certain polemical works written in defence of Judaism against the attacks of Christianity, and to a particular passage in the Hebrew liturgy directed against *heretics*—*ולכשורדים* (which Reuchlin mistook as applying to Christians in general.) Subsequently, as we shall learn in the sequel, he sorely regretted having written this anti-Jewish letter. For his heart did not share the prejudices of his mind. He was kind, or, at least, respectful toward the Jews, whenever he had any intercourse with them. He perhaps found that they

were better than the representation given of them by the German Christians. His sense of right and justice could not consent to suffer the Jews to be maltreated, still less to lend a helping hand himself for their persecution.

At the time the Dominicans of Cologne and their tool, Pfefferkorn, engaged in a controversy with Reuchlin, the latter had already attained the zenith of his life and renown. He was esteemed by high and low for his integrity; raised to the nobility by the Emperor Frederic; appointed Counsellor and Judge of the Swabian Confederation by the Emperor Maximilian; honored, loved, almost adored by the Order, if we may so call it, of Liberal Thinkers—the Humanists, both within and without Germany. As yet, not even the shadow of heresy rested on Reuchlin. He was on the best of terms with the Dominican Order, advocating, without remuneration, their cause in secular affairs. Still, as if by instinct, those ignorant bigots saw in him their secret enemy. The diligent study of the sciences, the steady pursuit of the Classics, the great care to attain an elegant Latin style, the wonderful enthusiasm (which Reuchlin was the first to create in Germany) for the Greek—in the eyes of the bigoted Catholics the language of schismatics—and now, in addition, even the introduction of the Hebrew language, the preference given to the “*Hebrew truth*” and Hebrew text, in opposition to the corrupt text of the Latin Vulgate, which the Church regarded as canonical and inviolable—all this the advocates of ignorance regarded as so many crimes, against which, indeed, the inquisition could not proceed forthwith, but which were to be duly noted in the “black-book” for heretics.

SECTION VII.

The instructions given to Pfefferkorn, the secret agent of the Dominicans of Cologne, to engage Reuchlin as judge in the examination of the blasphemous literature of the Hebrews, were, as has been already intimated, shrewdly calculated to serve as a snare against that leading liberalist. The Jewish convert, therefore, on his second journey to the camp of the Emperor, paid Reuchlin a special visit, showed him the imperial mandate, and endeavored to gain him as co-adjutor in carrying out his malicious designs. Reuchlin, though declining to participate in such designs, commended his zealous desire to destroy such Jewish writings as spoke contemptuously of Christianity; but, he thought, the mandate of the Emperor was not in accordance with the forms of law, in consequence of which it would be unlawful to proceed against the Hebrew books, and the authorities would be unwilling to carry out the order of the Emperor. It is also said, that Reuchlin gave him to understand that he would be willing to take an active part in the matter, if requested by the Emperor.

Having visited Reuchlin, Pfefferkorn pro-

ceeded to the Emperor, then in Tyrol, and contrived to invalidate the arguments of the Jews against the confiscation of their books, and to obtain a new mandate (November 10, 1509.) In this, Maximilian reproaches the Jews with having dared to offer resistance, and ordered the confiscation to be continued. He appointed, however, Archbishop Uriel, Commissary of investigation, suggesting to him the propriety of obtaining the written opinions of the Universities of Cologne, Mayence, Erfurt and Heidelberg on the subject, and of consulting learned men, such as *Reuchotin*, *Victor de Karben*, and that inquisitor—who, though perfectly ignorant in Hebrew, was the least to be slighted—*Hoogstraten*, chief of the Dominicans. With this mandate in his pocket, Pfefferkorn hastened back to the scene of his activity in the Rhenish provinces. Archbishop Uriel thereupon appointed the Regent of the University of Mayence, Herrmann Hess, his deputy in superintending the confiscation of the Hebrew books. Pfefferkorn, in company with the latter, again repaired to Frankfort, to search the houses of the Hebrews for their books. Fifteen hundred Hebrew MSS. (including those previously confiscated) were taken in that city and deposited in the City Hall. In other cities also—Worms, Bingen, Lorch, Laufen, Mayence and Deutz—Pfefferkorn zealously plied his vocation. He subsequently asserted that the Jews had offered him considerable sums of money to induce him to desist from informing against them, but that he did not succumb to the temptations of Satan.

The Israelites, however, did not remain idle. They again contrived to gain some distinguished Christians to espouse their just cause. They sent delegates to the Emperor, having first provided them with letters of recommendation from eminent Christians, among others probably also from the Archbishop *Uriel*, who played the part of a double dealer in this matter, though rather favorably inclined to the Hebrews. The Jewish delegates represented to the Emperor the atrocious character of the wrong done them by their bitter opponent, Pfefferkorn. They declared his statements concerning themselves to be base calumnies, they having not any blasphemous writings whatever against Christianity. They referred to the privileges which had been anciently granted them, and repeatedly since confirmed by Popes and Emperors, one of which was, that neither the secular nor ecclesiastical authorities should encroach upon their internal, religious affairs. Their remonstrances were not without effect. For the Emperor issued another mandate (1510), commanding that all the confiscated books should be returned to the Jews. The Israelites, as may well be imagined, rejoiced exceedingly over the triumph of their cause. They had indeed escaped a great peril; for not merely their literature, which was so much endeared to them, but their own condition as subjects of the Empire, was at stake. The

confiscation of the Talmud would easily have given rise to other vexations. The Dominicans would not have failed in finding fresh opportunities to humble and persecute the Jews.

But they, too, had triumphed too soon. The Dominicans and their tool and confederate, Pfefferkorn, would not so easily surrender the trophies they had already acquired. A lamentable occurrence, in the Manor of Brandenburg, added fresh fuel to their hostile designs, giving them another pretext for renewing their complaints. An inhabitant of Pommernia had stolen a ciborium, with a golden pyx, containing the consecrated wafer of the Church. Being asked what he had done with the host, he confessed that he had sold it to some Jews in Spandau, Brandenburg and Stendal. As a matter of course, the thief's testimony against the Jews was fully believed, and, in consequence, the Bishop of Brandenburg, with a glowing fanaticism, advocated the persecution of the Jews in his diocese. Thereupon, the bigoted Elector, *Joachim I.* of Brandenburg, one of the principal persecutors of heretics, summoned those accused of the crime to Berlin. In addition to the charge of insulting the host, they were now also accused of infanticide. Joachim caused them to be tortured, and then ordered thirty-eight of them to be burned alive on a gridiron. Firm and resolute, chanting hymns of praise, these martyrs of Brandenburg delivered themselves up to the flames (July 19, 1510.) Two only had not the courage to brave the tormenting fire, but underwent baptism in order to meet with an easier, and apparently more honorable, death—decapitation. This is the first record we possess of the Israelites of Berlin and Brandenburg.

The enemies of the Jews eagerly strove to make capital of this event, and, taking it for granted that the accusations were founded on truth, published a work on the subject, containing revolting wood-cuts, representing the torments of the Jews. This occurrence created a great deal of excitement in Germany. The Dominicans of Cologne gladly availed themselves of this, for the purpose of inducing the Emperor to issue another mandate for the confiscation of all Jewish writings, these alone being alleged as the cause of the hostile spirit of the Jews toward the Christians. They could not, indeed, attain the desired object in a direct manner; for the Emperor was by this time fully convinced of the falsity of the charge. But they again made their plea through the same medium as before. The bigoted ducal Abbess, Kunigunde, to whom the horrid wickedness of the Jews was represented in still more glaring colors by the light of the late occurrence, was again to exert her influence upon her imperial brother. The Dominicans gave her to understand, that it would be seriously detrimental to Christianity if the Jews, who were continually insulting the consecrated wafer and killing Christian children, were allowed to boast that their books had been

restored to them at the bidding of the Emperor, and that the latter would thus be looked upon as approving the insults therein heaped upon the Christian religion. They further alleged that this course would not only confirm ignorant Jews in their blindness, but also promote the infidelity of sinful Christians. Whatever calumnies against the Jews, Pfefferkorn and the Dominicans could not or would not communicate to the Emperor himself, were listened to with an attentive ear by his bigoted sister. They knew full well that she alone was able to dim the moral perceptions of Maximilian.

But in a still different manner these cunning enemies of the Jews endeavored to prevail over the mind of the Emperor and prejudice him against the Jews. They felt instinctively that the masses did not share their hostile intents. Many a Christian of influence was indignant at the intrigues of Pfefferkorn, whom the Dominicans placed in the foreground; they took umbrage at his conduct, and taunted him severely. They were convinced that all his assertions were mere fabrications. They well knew that the Jews had no idea of deriding the Church, and that the Talmud was not full of blasphemies against Christianity. This equitably disposed class of men—Christians by birth as well as by adoption—did not, indeed, publicly express themselves in favor of the Jews; they did not, however, on the other hand, give any countenance to Pfefferkorn's doings. It was, therefore, the special care of the Dominicans of Cologne to so change public opinion as to enlist the sympathies of the masses in their behalf, thus enabling them ultimately to influence the Emperor himself in their favor. For this purpose they again published, under Pfefferkorn's name, another libel upon the character of the Hebrews, written in German, entitled, "*Praise and Honor to the Emperor Maximilian*," (March, 1510.)

In this production, thick clouds of sweet incense are offered unto the Emperor, accompanied with the regret that the charges made against the Jews are so frivolously and ignorantly disregarded in Christian circles. Again, it is alleged that the Talmud, the usury of the Jews, and their facility in acquiring riches, were the cause of their obstinate refusal to embrace Christianity. The author does not conceal the fact, that his inimical movements against the Jews were encouraged by the Duchess Kunigunde, and that she prevailed upon the Emperor to issue the mandate for the confiscation of Hebrew works. He mentions by name (though in this he only exposes his ignorance) such rabbinical works as he alleges are full of blasphemous utterances against Christianity. He brands the Jews as heretics, because they observe certain usages and superstitious ceremonies, which are contrary to the text of Scripture. He even maliciously upbraids the Jews for preferring to betroth their daughters to men versed in the Talmud, and charges the pious sons of Israel with in-

chastity, because, from religious motives, they are moderate in the indulgence of conjugal pleasures. The belief of the Jews in a Messiah, their picturesque representations of Paradise, their funeral rites, their innocent legends (e. g., the legend respecting an old tomb-stone in Worms)—all this the calumniating author is not satisfied with merely deriding as gross follies, but brands them as so many crimes. As to the blasphemies contained in the Talmud, he would silence them by the destruction of the entire Talmud itself. In regard to the objection that such a proceeding would be useless, since the Jews might conceal many a copy, or procure a fresh supply from their brethren in foreign lands—to meet this objection, he suggested a plan which fully reveals his fiendish malice. He would compel the Jews to fast some day, tempting their appetite by placing before them fuming, savory meat, boiled fish, wine, oil, honey and milk; and in this situation, with their heads uncovered, they were to take a solemn oath, that they will deliver up all their books, and neither copy nor import any from abroad; and if, after this, any one should be discovered in the possession of a copy of the Talmud, he was to suffer the extreme penalties attached to the crime of perjury, and be excommunicated by the rest of the Jews. Thus did Pfefferkorn design, by means of corporal and spiritual torture, to make the Hebrews themselves the tools of his malice.

In the same spirit of invective, he strives to silence, in advance, and throw suspicion on, those who would raise their voice in favor of the Jews. He regarded all such as corrupt and hypocritical, bribed by the gold of the Jews. At the close of his invective, he threatens that, in case the Jews should persist in their obduracy, he would publish still more works, compared with which those already published would appear but as a preface; he would exhaust the entire quiver of poisoned arrows against them; would republish the long-forgotten, bungling work called, *Toldoth Jeshu*, ("The Genealogy of Jesus,") and, with the assistance of the converted Jews, *Victor de Karben* and others, expose the anti-Christian spirit and baneful influence of the Jewish race. This book, written originally in German, was translated into Latin by a Frislander, *Andreas Rutter*, in order to excite all Christendom, in and out of Germany, against the Jews.

Not content with having published this work, he also addressed a special circular—a MS. of which is still to be found in the library of Wolfenbittel, which also contains nearly all the other writings of Pfefferkorn—to the temporal and spiritual authorities, in which he endeavored to efface the impression made by the last imperial mandate, commanding the suspension of the confiscation of Hebrew books.

In this way the Dominicans of Cologne—ever in the background of Pfefferkorn—endeavored anew, through the imperial sister and public opinion, to bring a powerful

moral pressure to bear upon the Emperor. Through the former, however, these ardent enemies of the Jews attained their object more successfully. Kunigunde did her utmost to incline her brother favorably to the Dominicans. On her knees, with tears in her eyes, she conjured him to take some action in reference to the literature of the Hebrews. Pfefferkorn, too, importuned the Emperor with calumnies against their literature. Maximilian was embarrassed. He could not, on the one hand, refuse to comply with the ardent wishes of his beloved sister; nor was he much edified by the tissue of falsehoods concerning the Jews, on the other. He found a way, however, of appearing fair and equitable toward both parties. He issued a new mandate—the fourth on the subject—July 6, 1510, bidding Archbishop Uriel to take up the matter again, but under a different form. He was to obtain the opinions of the German Universities above mentioned, also of *Reuchlin*, *Victor de Karben* and *Hoogstraten*, as to whether it was godly, laudable and really beneficial to the cause of Christianity, as Pfefferkorn stoutly maintained, to deliver the Talmud to the flames. These opinions were to be based, not on mere presumption, but on thorough investigation. The result of the decision, or decisions, on the value of the Hebrew literature, was to be transmitted to the Emperor by Pfefferkorn, he being the first to suggest the subject. Well might the Israelites, with deep solicitude, look forward to the result of the several decisions. It was to decide their weal or woe.

It was very fortunate for the Israelites that a man so upright and veracious, and so prepossessed in favor of Hebrew and Cabalistical literature, as *Reuchlin*, was solicited to give his opinion on the character of their diverse literature. The Dominicans of Cologne, who had proposed him, frustrated, by this very act, their own designs, and ultimately changed *Reuchlin* himself into a bitter opponent of their hostile intentions.

Reuchlin, having received the order of the Emperor, at once proceeded to answer the question, "Whether it was godly, praiseworthy and beneficial to Christianity to burn the writings of the Jews—particularly the Talmud." He wrote out his opinion in less than three months (from August 12 to October 6, 1510.) His decision was exceedingly favorable to the writings indicted, and contained, besides, many a pungent insinuation against the unprincipled instigator, Pfefferkorn. No wonder that *Reuchlin* availed himself of all the learning and genius at his command in defending the Hebrew literature, seeing that she, the favorite of his affections, was arraigned before the public tribunal. His opinion, indeed, is written in the pedantic, heavy style of the legal profession of his time; but it gives evidence of much tact and skill. He very justly proceeded, at the very outset, on the ground that, to decide the question at issue, the writings of the

Hebrews were not to be treated as constituting one *homogeneous* literature—there being, aside from the Bible, six different categories of the same. Under the categories of “poetry, fable and satire,” there may, indeed, exist invectives against Christianity, though he only knew of two such, namely: Lipmann’s polemical work against Christianity, and the “Genealogy of Jesus the Nazarene.” But these, he is assured by the Jews themselves, have been mostly destroyed, and the reading of them prohibited. Such libels, he admits, if to be found, are to be treated with the utmost rigor and, without any hesitation, consigned to the flames. On the other hand, there was a category embracing commentaries to the Bible and general works of interpretation—written by such men as *Rashi*, *Ibn Ezra*, the two *Kimchis*, *Nachmanides*, &c.—which, far from being injurious to Christianity, were even indispensable for the study of Christian theology. The most important ideas, he maintains, which learned Christians have presented in their commentaries to the Old Testament, are taken from Jewish authors, these being the fountains from which issue the real truth and proper understanding of Sacred Scriptures. If, for example, we were to select from the copious works of the best Christian commentator, *Nicholas de Lyra*, such portions as he borrowed from *Rashi*, the balance of *original* ideas could be reduced to a few pages. Besides, it was a disgrace to many Christian Doctors that, for want of Hebrew and Greek learning, they interpreted the Scriptures falsely. True, some Christian theologians say: “We will put up with our commentaries; we need not the Jews!” But to such he would reply, that he who has to put up with a thing, has but a poor supply, and resembles the man who, in the winter, for want of better clothing, has to be content with light garments. In regard to that category of literature, which embraces sermons, hymns, prayers and the like, it would be contrary to the imperial and ecclesiastical Law to deprive the Jews of such books, as this would be encroaching upon their right to worship God in their synagogues according to their convictions, customs, rites and ceremonies. As to the category including works on philosophy, natural science and liberal arts, these did not differ in any respect from similar works written in Greek, Latin or German. If they contain any thing injurious, then let them be abolished. In regard to the Talmud itself, against which the charge was principally directed, Reuchlin confessed that he understood nothing whatever thereof. But, then, there were other learned Christians who knew no more about it than he did, except so much as they learned from the charges which have been preferred against it by such men as *Raimund Martin*, *Paul de Burgos*, *Alfonso de Spina*, *Peter Schwarz*, and, most recently, by *Pfefferkorn*. But he also knew a good many who did not understand a word of the Talmud, and yet condemn the same. But the opinion

of such deserves no more consideration, than that of a man writing against Mathematics, without understanding any thing thereof. To silence the arguments of the Jews by pugilistic force, instead of logically refuting their objections to Christianity—this he calls a “*bacchanalian argument*.” He was, therefore, of opinion that *the Talmud should not be burned*, even though it were true that it contained, among other things, words of abuse against the founders of Christianity. “If, he declares, the Talmud was indeed as deserving of condemnation as was maintained, our ancestors, who were much more zealous in the defense of the Christian religion than we at the present day, would have burned the same many centuries ago. As to the converted Jews, *Peter Schwarz* and *Pfefferkorn*, who are the only ones to insist on burning it—they may have their own private motives for so doing.”

In his lengthy and even tedious disquisition, the main object of Reuchlin evidently is to prevent the application of the torch to the Talmud. His arguments in the case will hardly stand the test of reason; and, considering that they are made in the style of a jurist, remind one of the tricks and devices of the pettifogger. His opinion does credit to his heart more than to his mind or legal lore. The following may serve for illustration:

The Talmud, he argues, if bad, is to be preserved the more, in order to serve as a target for Christian theologians, enabling them to practice the art of mental fencing! Again: “The Jews, in case we should burn the Talmud, might boast that the Christians, dreading its influence on their faith, destroyed it altogether; just as a duke, afraid to fight a duel with a knight, first deprives the latter of his weapon.” Again; “If the Talmud were destroyed, the Jews would cling to it so much the more, on the principle that forbidden fruit is the more tempting!” Again: The Christians might, at some future synod, need the Talmud for reference, and would then be unable to find a copy! Still another quaint argument is this: If the Christians were no more able to hold religious controversies with the Jews—which, of course, could only proceed on *Talmudic* ground—they would be divided by dissensions and schisms among themselves, “it being a characteristic of the human mind that it can never rest; as is seen by the controversy recently commenced between the Franciscans and Dominicans in regard to the immaculate conception of Mary, and as to whether the apostle Paul was married, or whether the Father of the Church, Augustine, was a monk.” Among the closing arguments the following is, after all, the most passable: The burning of the Talmud in Germany would not have the desired effect, inasmuch as the Jews have higher institutions of learning in Constantinople, in the Orient generally, and even in Italy, where they could, undisturbed, pursue their Talmudic studies. Reuchlin

A very good argument

also brings some juridical quibbling to bear, as, for example: According to the Canon Code, it was prohibited to take money or other valuables from the Jews, the person so doing being subject to excommunication. But as this punishment was attached only to capital sins, consequently it was sinful, and not acceptable to God, to deprive the Jews of their books. Kings and Emperors are bound to observe this Law, the Imperial code having confirmed it. The Canon also prohibits taking away by force the children of the Jews." "By this, says Reuchlin, books also are meant; for many a man loves his books as much as his children, it being said of poets, that they regard their books as their children."

In regard to the category of Cabalistical works, it was comparatively easy for Reuchlin to defend *them*, and protect them from the flames. It was only necessary for him to refer to the events that occurred at the Papal Court less than two decennia previously. The learned and eccentric Count Pico de Mirandola had caused the Cabalah to be enthusiastically revered, having laid down the proposition, that it furnished the strongest foundation for the principal doctrines of Christianity. Pope Sixtus IV had several cabalistical works translated into Latin, (1484). When, at a later period, Bishop Peter Gavisia appeared against Pico de Mirandola, and maintained the injurious character of the Cabalah, Pope Alexander VI had the subject in dispute investigated by a College of Cardinals, and issued an apostolic brief confirming Picos' orthodoxy and the utility of the Cabalah, (1493). At the close of his opinion, Reuchlin arrives at the following conclusion: The Jews ought by no means to be deprived of their books, nor should these be destroyed; on the contrary, two professors of Hebrew should be engaged for ten years at every German University, who were also to teach the Rabbinical Hebrew; then the Jews might gently, through conviction, be converted to Christianity.

Reuchlin was not satisfied with merely giving his opinion on the literature of the Hebrews; he also invalidated the arguments made against the same by their enemies, particularly Pfefferkorn. Admitting, he argued, that the writings of the Jews deny the founder of Christianity and his doctrines, this was of no more importance than the fact that the Jews themselves do not recognize either Christ or his teachings; and yet Christianity has tolerated them more than fourteen centuries. He brands in particular the accuser of the Jews, Pfefferkorn—not by name, indeed, but in such a way as to be easily recognized. Remarking that he did not know a single Jew of his day that understood the Talmud, he intentionally insinuates by the way that he has become acquainted not only with Peter Schwarz, but also with Pfefferkorn. He further enumerates the base, selfish motives prompting Jews to embrace Christianity. "I speak not of

those, says Reuchlin, who, from envy, hate, fear, poverty, vengeance, ambition, worldliness, or simple-mindedness, enter our fold, becoming Christians only in name. I have known many such; they have never been good for any thing. They believe one thing as readily as another, and, if they are not successful at home, they run off to Turkey and become Jews again." In another part of his decision, Reuchlin deals Pfefferkorn, without naming him, some very severe blows in the following language: "If an ignorant fellow were to come and exclaim, O, most powerful sovereign, your majesty ought to suppress and burn the books on alchemy, because they contain blasphemous, disgraceful and foolish remarks against our faith, what would his imperial majesty say in response to such a blockhead or jackass? He would be told that he was a simpleton, worthy of being laughed at, rather than of being indulged. Should the books on a certain art or science be destroyed, because such a weak-minded man can not comprehend their profound meaning, and views things in a different light from what they are?"

His espousal of the cause of the Jews, or rather his indignation against Pfefferkorn, led Reuchlin so far, as to ridicule the charges of the latter against the Jews, based upon certain imprecatory formulas in their ritual, most glaringly forgetting that he himself had once made the very same charges in the "Circular to a Nobleman," above alluded to. "But recently," he remarks, "a little book was published (the 'Enemy of the Jews,' by Pfefferkorn,) in which reference is made to a prayer which the Jews are said to use against us. The author lays great stress on the same, presuming that it imprecates curses on the holy apostles and their successors, the Christian Church and the Roman Empire. Through such accusations, the illiterate could easily be filled with such hatred against the Jews, as to endanger the life and property of the latter. Viewed in a proper light, however, said prayer will be found to contain not one word that signifies converted Jews, apostles or Christians in general, and the Roman Empire." [Reference is here had to that passage in Pfefferkorn's work, where the imprecation *ישו כורס* (originally *ולכנין*) is applied to converted Jews, and the phrase *מלכות זרין* to the Roman Empire.]

SECTION VIII.

Verily, ever since the Hebrews have been maltreated and persecuted by Christian governments, they found no such generous advocate of their interests as they did in Reuchlin—and that, too, in an official declaration made for the Chancellor of the realm and the Emperor. Two points, which he asserted with peculiar emphasis, were of special importance to the Jews. The first was, that the Jews are *fellow-citizens* ("*conceives nobiscum Romani imperii*,") of the

German Empire, and *enjoy the same rights and protection* as other citizens. It was the first faint expression of that complete emancipation, which required more than three centuries to be fully and boldly expressed and recognized. The ghostly apparition of the Middle Ages was thereby partly dispelled. For until then it was maintained that the Jews, by virtue of the conquest of Jerusalem by Vespasian and Titus, had become the sole property of the Roman and (their successors) the German Emperors; that these had a perfect right to put them to death, and were only exercising an act of grace and mercy in sparing their bare life; that, in a word, the Jews had no rights whatsoever that were to be respected by their rulers. The Jews, too, Reuchlin maintained, possessed certain rights that must be respected by both secular and ecclesiastical authorities, by the Emperor and the realm. This was the first feeble, tremulous ray of light in that long and gloomy night. The second point, which he enunciated more clearly and openly, was, that the Jews can not be regarded and treated as heretics. Standing, as they do, without the pale of the Church, and not being forced to embrace the Christian religion, the ideas of heresy and infidelity—those fatal, horrible watchwords of the Middle Age—were by no means applicable to them. By the first proposition, the Jews were saved from arbitrary treatment on the part of the secular arm, while the second furnished them, in a sense, an asylum, where they were safe from the still farther-reaching arm of spiritual authority. In his indignation against Pfefferkorn's arrogance, Reuchlin himself did not appreciate the full bearing of his general assertions; they seem to have been dropped, as it were, by accident. We shall soon learn how his enemies eagerly seized the same, and used them as weapons of attack against him.

That the opinion of Reuchlin was of great benefit to the Jews, will become still more evident, when we consider the opinions given by the several learned faculties, to whom, as a matter of course, the Talmud was a book "sealed with seven seals." The Dominicans of Cologne, without one exception, the theological faculty, the inquisitor, Hoogstraten, and the gray-haired convert, Victor de Karben, who were all of one and the same opinion, did not take the trouble to inquire first, whether the Talmud contained any thing detrimental or hostile to Christianity. They took this for granted; and, consequently, were not slow in giving their decision. The Talmud, and all other Hebrew works of a similar tendency, were, in their judgment, to be confiscated and burned. But they were not satisfied with this. Hoogstraten, in particular, had the impudence to declare, that a *standing Inquisition* should be called into existence for the Jews. Men versed in Hebrew were to extract heretical passages from the Talmud and other Jewish writings—that is, such sentences as do not har-

monize with Holy Writ, which contradict or abolish the latter—and then ask the Jews whether or not they acknowledge the pernicious character of the books containing such passages. If they admitted this, why, then, they could have no objection to such blasphemous and heretical books being consigned to the flames. But if they stubbornly insisted that the sentiments expressed in such passages was part and parcel of their own belief, then let the Emperor deliver them as public heretics, to be punished by the inquisitorial tribunal. Truly, a pleasant prospect for the Jews, and a promising mine of wealth for the avarice of the Dominicans! Pfefferkorn, or Victor de Karben, would then be commissioned to make extracts from the Talmud—such as do not speak in very flattering terms of primitive Christianity, or are not in harmony with Scripture. Thereupon Hoogstraten, as Grand Inquisitor, would summon the Jews before his tribunal, catechise them, and, finding them, as a matter of course, guilty of heresy, condemn them to be burned alive, or at least extort money from them! The idea is original, and reflects credit upon the ingenuity of its inventor.

The faculty of the University of Mayence pronounced a similar decision, going, however, much farther. They were of opinion that not alone all Talmudical and Rabbinical works were full of errors and heresies, but even the Biblical text was very likely corrupted and adulterated, particularly in matters of faith! Consequently, the Jewish Bibles, also, are to be confiscated and examined; and, if found to be as suggested, they were to be delivered to the flames. This, too, gave evidence of a shrewdly calculated design: The Hebrew text of the Bible was not in harmony with that of the Latin Vulgate, which was the authorized version of the Church, though originally a bungled piece of work. The narrow-minded Fathers of the Church continually complained that the Jews had falsified certain passages in Scripture, and, in particular, erased those relating to Jesus. What if the unsullied mother were to be made to face the degenerate daughter, and be told that, unless she share the faults of her daughter, she did not deserve to exist? Indeed, this was another ingenious contrivance of the Dominicans to get rid of the troublesome text of the Hebrew—the so-called "Hebrew truth" of Reuchlin—that solid text which majestically shook its head at the childish and forced interpretations of the Fathers of the Church. Had the theologians of Mayence and Cologne succeeded in carrying out their decision, the Word proclaimed from burning Sinai, the Prophets, the Psalms—monuments of a gracious dispensation—would have been consigned to the flames, and in their stead would have been put a supposititious offspring—the corrupt Latin Vulgate. The Dominicans of Mayence and Cologne seemed to have some forebodings of the fact that the plain, simple interpretation of

Scripture would put an end to their mischievous career.

The theological faculty of Erfurt answered in a similar strain. That of Heidelberg alone was discreet enough to advise the Emperor to call a convention of the learned of all the Universities, to deliberate in common on the expediency of tolerating or destroying the Talmud.

Most of the decisions re-echoed Pfefferkorn's animosity in another respect also; they solicited the Emperor, by the way, to prohibit the Jews lending money on interest, and force them to hard labor. So closely allied were the theologians of Mayence and Cologne to Pfefferkorn, that they prayed the Emperor to protect the latter against the alleged persecutions of the Jews, recommending him as an excellent Christian and zealous servant of the Church.

Fortunately for the Israelites, the Dominicans themselves, by means of a knavish act, frustrated their own cunningly-devised plan.

Reuchlin had sent his favorable opinion on the Jewish literature sealed, through a messenger under oath, to the electoral Archbishop Uriel of Mayence; presuming that, as an official secret, it would be opened and read only by the latter and the Emperor. But Pfefferkorn, thinking the day for taking revenge on the Jews had nearly arrived, got possession of it, with the seal broken, before it reached the Emperor. How this happened, has never been fully explained. Reuchlin himself, in several of his works, does not hesitate to denounce the Dominicans of Cologne as unscrupulous seal-breakers. Pfefferkorn, however, whose statements though deserve but little credit, gives the following explanation: The Elector, he says, opened, as he was authorized to do, the several decisions, and transferred them to him, he being appointed agent by the Emperor. When he (Pfefferkorn) came into the office to get Reuchlin's paper, it was lying neglected on the desk, derided by the secretary of the Archbishop, the latter having, with a contemptuous smile, declared that Reuchlin's favorable opinion must have been dictated by a Jew. Having thereupon brought the several decisions on the Talmud to the Emperor, the latter, too busy to examine them himself, commissioned three men—*Jerome Baldung*, Professor of theology; *Angelus Freiburg*, the jurist, and the Carthusian Prior *Gregory*, the imperial confessor—to propose what steps were to be taken in reference to the literature of the Jews. They, after careful deliberation, advised the Emperor to allow the Jews to keep the entire Bible, but to charge the bishops, assisted by the secular authorities, to take from them all other books, keep a register of the same, select those whose contents were philosophical, medical or poetical, and return them to their owners; but retain all the Talmudical and Rabbinical works, and, in general, all such as pervert Sacred Scripture, and were consequently of a heretical and blasphemous character, and distribute

them in part among the several Universities in the land, for the edification of Christians and as a testimony of the true faith; the books, however, to be fastened down with chains, so that they might not again fall into the hands of the Jews, and the balance to be destroyed by fire. In respect to Reuchlin's opinion, the Carthusian prior is said to have remarked, that it was written "with golden ink"—that is, for money received from the Jews. The Emperor himself is represented as being inclined to lay the entire question regarding the toleration or destruction of the Talmud before the approaching Diet. So far the representation of Pfefferkorn. The truthful Reuchlin, however, states that his opinion so convinced the Emperor of the falsehood of the accusation, that he ordered the restoration of those Jewish works that had been already confiscated.

But the very intrigues of Pfefferkorn and of the Dominicans of Cologne played havoc with their shrewdly-devised calculations. We are almost inclined to thank them for having brought before the public what was at first to be kept as an official secret; for by this act they called another tribunal into existence, which threatened to overwhelm the Church instead of the Jews. The opinion of Reuchlin, whose voice was of great weight with the Emperor and his counsellors, greatly exasperated them. To counteract his influence, therefore, they hastened to send forth to the public a strong refutation of his arguments for the Jews and their literature—and this, in the German language, in order to make their cause popular, and to fanaticize the multitude to such a degree, as to render it impossible for the Emperor himself to listen to the voice of Reuchlin. The very title of the work was calculated to conjure up an onslaught against the Jews—"Hand-mirror against the Jews and their writings, which despise the Christian government, and which must be destroyed as being blasphemous, heretical and superstitious." It was indeed an act of unheard-of impudence, to make a document, written for the Emperor, the subject of public attack. At the fair held at Frankfort, in the spring of 1511, Pfefferkorn and his wife exposed the "Hand Mirror" for sale, and then peddled it from town to town, from house to house.

The Dominicans of Cologne had taken part in the composition of the "Hand Mirror," more so even than in Pfefferkorn's previous venomous invectives. He even admits himself that he consulted his friends in the composition of the same, in consequence of which it has a more learned cast than his other works. At the very outset of the book, the participation or rather complicity of one of them—the vain, puffed-up *Arnold de Tongern*—is betrayed. The "Hand Mirror" pretends to be an answer, long since prepared, to the query of Arnold, asking why the praiseworthy proceedings in regard to the Jewish books do not continue; in response to which the author says that the opposition, not merely on the part

of the malicious Jews, but also on the part of many Christians, was the cause of the interruption. Pfefferkorn places himself before the public as the offended, injured party—the innocent victim of persecution; Reuchlin having not only touched his honor, but even branded him before the Emperor as a guilty calumniator. The weak parts in Reuchlin's opinion soon caught his eye; against these he directed his attack at once with great pertinacity, intending thus to trip the giant, with whom he was little able to measure strength. Reuchlin having asserted that the imprecatory formula in the Jewish ritual was perfectly harmless and not coined in opposition to the Christians and the Roman Empire, Pfefferkorn to the contrary quoted the testimony of converted Jews—such as Paul Burgos, Geronimo de Santa Fe—as also of Alfonso de Spina and the Father of the Church, Jerome; remarking, by the way, that Reuchlin understood but little the Hebrew of which he was so proud, being able to read Latin only, or words interpreted into German—and that, so awkwardly, “as an ass riding up a flight of stairs.” He declares Reuchlin never composed the Hebrew Grammar published under his name, the Jews having assisted him in the work. Being nothing but a bungler in this respect, how dared he presume to give his opinion, and to write unto lords and princes that the Jews should be treated, not as enemies, but as fellow-citizens of the Roman Empire?

SECTION IX.

The most vulnerable part of Reuchlin was the “Circular” which he had addressed, only five years previously, to a young nobleman—in which, with the very same spirit of vindictiveness which actuated Pfefferkorn and the Dominicans of Cologne, he maintained that the Jews, having formerly executed Jesus, blasphemed the Lord, and were never exempt from the charge of blasphemy against the founder of Christianity, against Mary, the Apostles and the Christians at large. In that “Circular,” too, he referred to polemical works and the imprecatory formula of the Hebrews. And now the author of the “Hand Mirror” exposes, with diabolical scorn, the glaring contradictions existing between Reuchlin's views in that “Circular,” and those in his opinion addressed to the Emperor. “If now,” exclaims Pfefferkorn, exultingly, “Reuchlin means to persist in his present opinions, then he must recant his first opinion. But if he still adheres to the latter—namely, that the Jews are guilty of blasphemy and abuse—why, then, he has uttered a falsehood to the Emperor and the German princes!” Such logic was indeed inexorable. Reuchlin had thus to expiate severely the sins he formerly committed against the Jews. Every thing else contained in the “Hand Mirror” is only a re-hash of previously published invectives and calumnies against the Jews. As an

evidence of their blasphemies, the author reports the cruelties of Marquis Joachim II, who has caused thirty-eight Jews to be burned alive in Berlin, (see above). In proof of their anti-Christian spirit, he quotes extracts from two polemical works in Hebrew. Had Pfefferkorn had any knowledge of the cogent objections of the Spanish Jews against the primitive history and doctrines of Christianity, he could have very much enlarged the catalogue of sins. Superficial extracts from the Talmud, made not from his own study of the original, but copied from other writers, were designed to show that the Jews—contrary to Reuchlin's supposition—were in reality heretics in the damnable sense of the word, that their writings were full of heresies, and must therefore be burned.

A still more grievous charge is brought against Reuchlin—one that was to brand him in the eyes of all good Christians, and excite horror against him: “Reuchlin is praised by the Jews; consequently he has gone over to them.” “This is a specimen of Jewish stratagems, to lure Christians into their nets.” By way of illustration, the author of the “Hand Mirror” relates most awful stories of Christians being enticed by Jews to embrace Judaism—stories which, for aught we know, may have been sheer fabrications, as well as a concoction of truth and falsehood. A Christian physician, Thomas by name, an eloquent speaker, who had much intercourse with Jews, is said to have denied Jesus, secretly confessed Judaism, observed the Jewish fasts, and—horrible to tell—poisoned nearly six hundred Christians with drugs. This Dr. Thomas is also said to have seduced Christians to apostasy, after the manner of the Jews, converting among others even a priest in Assmanshausen, who, again, misled two young Christian lads. Pfefferkorn pretends having personally seen all these apostate Christians—the Doctor, the priest, and the lads—in Prague, whence they are supposed to have emigrated to Turkey or Poland. In a similar way, the Jews are said to have duped but recently a Christian messenger from Deutz, and induced him even to put on the Jewish phylacteries; but being detected in the act, the latter was condemned to perpetual imprisonment, with nothing but bread and water to live on.

Pfefferkorn also relates an interesting romance of an anti-Jewish monk at Erfurt, who had not long since been artfully persuaded by the Jews to abandon the Church for the Synagogue. This young, bare-footed friar is said to have frequently thundered against the Jews from the pulpit, denouncing their blasphemies, their usury and easy vocations, and inciting the populace against them. In vain the Jews attempted to silence him by bribes; in vain they implored the city council to protect them against the fanatic monk. In their despair, the Jews availed themselves of the services of an old rabbi, who offered to bring relief to them, provided a thousand ducats were placed at

his disposal. Possessed of this amount, he commenced with regularly giving mendicant friars presents of bread and other victuals, under the pretext of expiating thereby the sin of usury of which he had been hitherto guilty, and of letting worthy Christians enjoy his ill-gotten gains. This extraordinary penance of the rabbi had the effect of bringing him into closer contact with the monks, and even with the terrible preacher. The Christian monk already imagined himself introducing the rabbi into the bosom of the Church, the latter seeming to be somewhat inclined to Christianity. Soon the people of Erfurt beheld the bare-footed friar and the rabbi even in company. The former did not shun the house of the Jew; the latter did not refrain from visiting the cloister. Now, this rabbi had a beautiful daughter, whom he represented as being an orphan, and only his foster-daughter, and expressly requested the monk to convert her. But in his attempts to convert the fair Jewess, the monk was overcome with worldly thoughts, which disturbed the quietude of his heart. The rabbi, seeing the effect produced on the latter, revealed to him, with tears in his eyes, a long pent-up secret—to-wit, that the monk was his own son, the offspring of illicit intercourse in the days of his youth, (in proof of which he referred the astonished friar to a mole the latter had on his body); adding, that he had been giving alms to the cloister for no other purpose than that of coming into closer relation with this, his natural son. The monk, believing this strange revelation, desires to ease his conscience by converting his supposed father. But the latter replies that, according to Scripture, the son must honor and follow father and mother, and not *vice versa*. With the prospect of obtaining the hand of the beautiful Jewess, the monk at last resolves to quit Erfurt and the scene of his Capuchin tirades against the Jews, to doff the gown, and flee to Rubishow in Poland, then to embrace Judaism, and marry the Jewess. Subsequently this friar is said to have regretted his apostasy, on account of which the Jews tortured him to death. Pfefferkorn drew the following lesson from this romance in his "Hand Mirror:" "If any one associates with the Jews in order to convert them by persuasion, he will himself be drawn into their errors and superstition."

In fine, the author of the "Hand Mirror" touches Reuchlin's honor. He does not, indeed, say it in so many words, but he insinuates it plainly enough, that the Jews have given him money to crush Pfefferkorn. He, who was the most incorruptible man in his day, was charged by his avacious opponents with having sold himself to the Jews! Pfefferkorn and his coadjutors also incited the entire Order of the Franciscans against him, accusing him of having spoken irreverently of one of their members. But the main point of attack was the heinous crime of Reuchlin in considering the Jews entitled to the same

rights and privileges as other citizens, and not regarding them as heretics.

SECTION X.

This libel, circulated by thousands far and wide, against a man so highly honored and esteemed, one of the Judges of the Suabian Confederation—a scholar, whose learning equaled that of an entire university—created, of course, an extraordinary sensation. Since the invention of the art of printing, it was the first polemic of the kind directed against a high dignitary; and this, in the German language, written for the understanding of the masses. Reuchlin's friends—and he had not a few—were justly indignant at the impudence of a converted Jew, who considered himself more orthodox than a native Christian of high rank, and dared to abuse the latter. When one day Pfefferkorn came with a fresh load of accusations into the imperial court, two courties, Provost Zobel and the learned patrician, *Peutingen*, talked very roughly to him on account of his invectives. The Dominicans of Cologne had, in this proceeding, indulged their venomous hatred more than was prudent. Against such attacks Reuchlin was bound to act; his honor was too deeply hurt. First of all, he hastened to the Emperor, complaining of the conduct of his malicious calumniator, Pfefferkorn, under whose name the "Hand Mirror" had been published. The Emperor manifested his displeasure by both word and gesture, and calmed the excited emotions of Reuchlin with the assurance of having the matter investigated by the Bishop of Augsburg. But in the pressure of business, and during the complicated state of his affairs in Italy, he forgot—as the great men of the world have at all times done—the plaintiff, his grievances, and the promised satisfaction. The autumnal fair of Frankfort was drawing nigh, at which Pfefferkorn intended to dispose of the balance of his "Hand Mirrors," and as yet nothing had been done to counteract it, either by or for Reuchlin.

Thus, then, Reuchlin was compelled, by dint of circumstances, to make the defense a personal matter, to appeal to public opinion, and thereby invest the question with a general, world-wide interest. He prepared a strong reply to the "Hand Mirror," for the approaching fair at Frankfort. Previously, however, he endeavored to modify and correct some of the propositions which he had laid down in his "Decision," which might be construed into too favorable a light for the Jews, thereby refuting in advance the exceptions taken in the "Hand Mirror." This he published in the form of an appendix of 52 articles to his "decision," addressing the same to the Archbishop Uriei of Mayence, (August 18, 1511.)

Shortly afterward (end of August or beginning of September,) appeared his world-renowned "Ocular Mirror," which he had hastily prepared for the press. In it he designed, in clear and definite language, to

expose the base intrigues of Pfefferkorn and his co-adjutors; but, in doing so, he exposed, without intending it, the nakedness of the Christianity of his day. It was the first work, of which we may, without exaggeration, say that it outweighed an open act. It was written directly against Pfefferkorn, but indirectly against the Dominicans of Cologne, they being the public patrons, protectors and instigators of his invectives. It appeals to all those "who love the truth, and hate falsehoods, insidious, malignant, sudden attacks, such as Pfefferkorn made use of in his libelous pamphlet. It relates in plain, unvarnished language, the entire course of events, beginning with the attempts of the "baptized Jew" to cast suspicion on the Talmud and have it delivered to the flames, and his endeavor to induce Reuchlin himself to aid him in carrying out his design. It reports the action of the Emperor and the Bishop of Mayence, and his own decision. It relates further the unfair means by which Pfefferkorn got possession of his decision and made improper use of the same in his libel, which contains no less than thirty-four untruths against him. The entire tenor of the book well displays the just indignation of a man of honor against a trickish knave. Before exposing the base character of Pfefferkorn, Reuchlin guards against the idea of having renounced the rights to which he is entitled by law, the libel of the former deserving the just penalty of the Law; particularly as he had incited the subjects of the realm to raise a tumult and riot against the authorities, in order to compel these to persecute the Jews—such conduct being considered a capital crime.

In reference to the charge that he wrote his defense of the Talmud for the sake of private gain, Reuchlin justly expresses the highest indignation, solemnly asseverating that he never, from the days of his childhood up to the present hour, received as much as a penny from the Jews; "and whoever has said or written any thing to the contrary, lies like a worthless, unprincipled scoundrel, even though he possess the pious features of a *Qurthusian*!" [This was an insinuation against the Emperor's Confessor, who charged him with having written with "golden ink."] Nor was Reuchlin less sensitive in regard to the depreciation of his Hebrew scholarship—particularly in regard to the charge that he was not the real author of his own Hebrew Grammar. He also replies, in a most dignified manner, to Pfefferkorn's reproach regarding his having learned Hebrew from the Jews, and having, consequently, had intercourse with them, which was said to be a violation of the Canonic Law. "The baptized Jew, he says, writes that the divine Law prohibits intercourse with the Jews. This is not true. Every Christian is permitted to go to law with them, to buy from them, or even give them presents. The case might even occur, where a Christian and a Jew inherit property in common.

It is also lawful to speak with, and learn from them, as St. Jerome and Nicholas de Lyra have done. Nay, more, a Christian should even love the Jew as his neighbor—all this is based on the laws." Occasionally, too, Reuchlin indulges in pungent sarcasm. Pfefferkorn having asserted that the Jew belongs to the species of the devil, Reuchlin replies that, if this be so, it is no wonder that Pfefferkorn told so many falsehoods—his person, and the milk which he imbibed in infancy, being of a diabolical character. Reuchlin further boldly declares that Pfefferkorn understood but little Hebrew, he having served up nothing new in all his anti-Jewish libels, except one thing—namely, that "the Jews make confession to fish and chickens;" this was the most precious knowledge with which he enriched the Christian Church.

In one respect, however, Reuchlin did Pfefferkorn injustice. He asserted that the latter published the "Hand Mirror" for the sake of pecuniary gain. This certainly could not have induced Pfefferkorn thoughtlessly to defame not only the Jews, but even so renowned a personage as Reuchlin. It was rather hate and lust of revenge against the former, and the necessity of defending himself against the latter; for, notwithstanding Reuchlin's protestations to the contrary, it was Pfefferkorn whom he attacked, though not by name, in his "Decision," addressed to the Emperor, and whom he now openly, and justly, chastized in his "*Ocular Mirror*."

It is easy to imagine the sensation produced by the publication of Reuchlin's "*Ocular Mirror*" at the time of the fair at Frankfurt—a season, when that city was the rendezvous of hundreds of thousands, who lent an attentive ear to any and every scandalous story. That a celebrated man like Reuchlin, who was so prominent among the highest functionaries of the aristocracy, should expose to public shame an accuser of the Jews, denouncing him as a calumniator, liar and scoundrel, was a thing so novel and surprising that the reading public could hardly believe their own eyes, imagining that they had been absorbed in a deep reverie. The Jews were still more eager to read the book, in which, for the first time, a man of honor used his influential voice in their behalf, branding all the oft-repeated denunciations of their enemies as base calumnies. They rejoiced in having at last found a friend among the Christians, and thanked God who had not forsaken them in their distress. They, too, as a matter of course, were very busy in circulating the work of Reuchlin far and wide. But, more than all, the advocates of ignorance tended to diffuse the same by their very opposition. Peter Meyer of Frankfurt, one of the most ignorant and impudent preachers, had no sooner got hold of it and, while at breakfast, in company with Pfefferkorn, read a few lines, than he cried out in anger: "To the gallows with it, to the gallows!" He also, as Commissary of the Archbishop of

Mayence, interdicted the sale of the "Ocular Mirror." But almost the entire Chapter of Mayence, nearly all the prebendaries were more favorably inclined to the humanities than Christianity, and as such they were admirers of Reuchlin. They, as well as other friends of Reuchlin, no doubt, influenced the Archbishop in favor of Reuchlin, causing him to suspend the interdict of the sale, he not having originally issued said interdict. This incident created considerable interest, and only served to give more publicity to the "Ocular Mirror," which was consequently sought, bought, and read still more. From all hands, from learned and unlearned circles, Reuchlin received letters of congratulations, expressing their joy at his having so boldly and sternly disposed of the impudent Pfefferkorn and those who indorsed his opinions.

Only those colleagues of Reuchlin, who had after the model of heathen literature created an artificial Olympus for their repose, from whose lofty heights they looked down with smiling contempt upon the groveling proceedings of Ecclesiastics, upon Christianity no less than upon the Talmud—those faint-hearted, over-wise men, *Erasmus of Rotterdam*, the canon *Mutian of Gontha*, the rich and learned patrician *Pirkheimer of Nuremberg*—these in their self-complacency, censured Reuchlin for the part he took against the semi-Jew Pfefferkorn and for the despised Talmud. Sensuous egoists as they were, they reveled in the rise and progress of liberal learning, without allowing the same to exert any influence in effecting a change in the affairs of the corrupt state of the church and society. In their social and literary meetings they derided Christianity with its demi-god, the Church with the Pope and priests, denouncing them as pious frauds and fictions. But in the presence of the uninitiated they dared not utter a word of reproach. Erasmus, the most prominent humanist of his age, but vacillating like a reed shaken by the wind, said to Pirkheimer in regard to Pfefferkorn: The villain could not be conquered, because he was a concoction of calumny and falsehood, and because he had so many partisans who would infuse him with fresh vigor in case he should grow faint; invectives, therefore, were of no avail against Pfefferkorn; conquering or conquered he would only disgrace all honorable opponents who undertook to fight against him. Pirkheimer, not attaching any importance to anything but the external and transitory nature of vain glory, blamed Reuchlin for writing a book which only tended to immortalize the name of the semi-Jew Pfefferkorn, who ought to have been obliterated from the memory of man. The most objectionable opinion of all was that of the refined, delicate canon Mutian. He rebuked Reuchlin for having made public the secret views of the learned, thus diminishing the respect due of the Emperor, the Pope, the Church, and, in particular, to the clerical and learned caste. "Therefore, leave us, O learned capnio, said he in a letter to Reuchlin,

undisturbed in the possession of our belief (or unbelief), and do not on the one hand favor the Jews, that would only result to the injury of the Christians on the other."

SECTION XI.

With the publication and diffusion of Reuchlin's Ocular Mirror and his defence of the Talmud a conflict began which grew more and more serious every day, extending further and wider, bearing upon points and relations that had hitherto been left out of view. The advocates of ignorance, who still possessed their powerful means of intimidating the public, did not look upon the challenge with indifference. The cause of Pfefferkorn was theirs also, it having been originally prompted by them. And now a man had ventured to oppose their plan, to disapprove of the condemnation of the Talmud, to represent it even as a work indispensable to Christianity, and far from approving the persecution of the Jews, commended them even to Christian love! This was too much of audacity! It was a desecration and degradation of Christianity in the eyes of the ignorant Dominicans. It excited them to such holy rage, that they shot far beyond the mark, committing one stupidity after another, thus irreparably injuring their cause.

Peter Meyer, the preacher of Frankfort, not being able to carry out his interdict of the sale of the Ocular Mirror, committed another blunder. During divine service he announced from the pulpit that Pfefferkorn would, on the eve of the coming Lady-day, preach against Reuchlin's Jew-book, and admonished his hearers to attend one and all on the occasion. Nothing could have been more perverse than such an idea. Pfefferkorn with his ugly, repugnant figure, with Jewish features sharply stamped upon his face, with a physiognomy betraying his meanness, was to preach before a Christian public in his Jewish-German jargon! Why, every word and gesture of his would set his hearers laughing and dispel all feelings of devotion. Besides, according to the law of the Catholic Church, it was unlawful for a layman, particularly a married layman, to perform the functions of a clergyman. A violation of this law was attended with the severest penalties. But recently a simple shepherd had been burned at the stake for assuming to officiate as preacher. In order not to violate the strict letter of the law, however, Pfefferkorn, on the day appointed—Sept. 7, 1511—preached before a large assembly, not in the church itself, but at the entrance of the same. It must have been a ludicrous spectacle to behold this ugly Jew making the sign of the cross over the multitude of the faithful, and speaking to them in his Jewish jargon of the principles of Christianity. His main object in preaching was to excite the hatred and contempt of his hearers against the Jews and their patrons.

But this was only an insignificant skirmish. The great battle was being prepared in Co-

logne—the principal seat of war. The Dominicans, who had so far fought with closed visor, now appeared openly on the ground. They appointed one of their associates, *Arnold de Tongern*, to examine Reuchlin's *Ocular Mirror*, for the purpose of finding heretical sentiments therein; which, of course, he did not fail in discovering most abundantly. Another Dominican, the Confessor *Ulrich Steinheim*, with an admirably assumed mien of simplicity and in the language of profound reverence informed Reuchlin of this fact in a letter dated Oct. 23, 1511, adding that the Dominicans of Cologne were not yet agreed as to what steps they should take against him; some having advised to burn the heretical book, others, more rigorous, to summon the author before the tribunal for heretics, while others, again, had proposed something else. This letter, intended no doubt to intimidate Reuchlin, had the desired effect. Reuchlin became exceedingly apprehensive. There was no pusillanimity or cowardice in this. For it was no small matter then to deal with the Dominicans, who possessed more power than even the Emperor and the Pope. Alexander VI., the pope, who did not shrink from the commission of the greatest outrage, availing himself of the dagger, poison and other instruments of death, literally dreaded the Order of Dominicans. He was wont to say, he would sooner venture to provoke one of the potent kings than one of those mendicant friars who, with the semblance of humility, tyrannized more than despots over Christendom.* If they are displeased with any thing," says the ingenious and courageous *Ulrich Hutten* in his introduction to *Nemo*, "they fold their brow, stare with their eyes, stick up their nose, crying, 'Into the fire!'" "To stir up the swampy region of the Dominicans is just as dangerous as to grasp thorny bushes. We must be on our guard when uttering any thing in relation to them. They are a dreadful clique, accustomed to pronounce sentence on every thing, but not to listen." The peaceful, repose-loving Reuchlin, then already fifty-six years old, must not be censured if, at first, he was anxious to evade a conflict with the Dominicans greedy for celebrating auto-da-fes. He, therefore, shortly after receiving the letter from the Dominican confessor, sent a missive (Nov. 1,) to the censor of his work; *Arnold de Tongern*, modifying some of his assertions in the "*Ocular Mirror*," adding by way of excuse that he did not give his opinion on the Talmud as a theologian but as a judge, not knowing that the University of Cologne was of a different opinion in reference to that Hebrew work. He further remarked that he had given his opinion from purely innocent motives, not intending to give offence to any party. He apologized for taking the liberty of speaking, as a layman, about theological matters, and asked them to consider his conduct as analogous to that of a priest, who, though no physician, takes

the liberty occasionally to give medical advice in case of sickness. He earnestly implored, that his errors might be pointed out and proved as such, and that he should not be condemned without being first warned.

Reuchlin wrote also, though in a somewhat bolder strain, to the Dominican Professor *Conrad Kollin*, a former acquaintance of his, soliciting him to present his cause in a favorable light before the Faculty of Cologne, and avert from him the threatening storm. In this letter he even ventured to attack the chief of the Dominican blockheads, Jacob Hoogstraten, telling his friend, with an air of incredulity on his part, that many regard Hoogstraten as the joint author of Pfefferkorn's libels, and derided him on account of the ingratitude he experienced at the hands of the Dominicans, notwithstanding the many services he had rendered them.*

For nearly two months Reuchlin waited for an answer. The Dominican Faculty of Cologne intentionally neglected him, in order to curb his temper by the uncertainty of the fate that awaited him, and cause him in humility to approach the cross. At last, in the early part of January, 1512, two letters were addressed to him—the one was of an official character from the theological faculty, the other private, and that, in an apparently friendly style, from Kollin; the two being evidently intended to supply their mutual deficiencies. The deanery reproached him with having prevented, by his interference, the execution of the praiseworthy designs of the Emperor to burn the Jewish books, with having given the Jews, who read and inculcated his *Ocular Mirror*, a most favorable opportunity to continue their derisions of Christ, the Virgin and the Apostles, and perverted the words of Scripture, thus giving offense to the orthodox and bringing suspicion upon his own sincerity as a Christian. But for the intercession of Tongern and Kollin, the Faculty would exercise a most rigorous censorship over his work; they would, however, proceed leniently in his case, and allow him, of his own accord, to remove the stumbling blocks that he had thrown in the way, and either bring more proof to substantiate his unsatisfactory defence (in Latin), or, like an obedient son of the Church, recant the favorable opinion he expressed on the Talmud. Kollin, in his letter, by way of complement to the other, with an assumed air of friendship, added that it was through his influence that the faculty treated him with such leniency. He also availed himself of this opportunity to express the sentiment with which the gigantic edifice of the Catholic Church must stand and fall—namely, that a layman, like Reuchlin, though ever so learned and orthodox, is no judge of theological matters. Kollin also intimated to him the danger of procrastination, since the Faculty would not be able to postpone pronouncing the sentence very

* ERASMUS, letter to Pirkheimer, v. Opera p. 268.

* Reuchlin's Letters, II, Nos. 11 and 12.

long, the temporal as well as the ecclesiastical authorities being exceedingly anxious to hear the result of the decision. There were many of his enemies ardently longing to see him condemned. His salvation, therefore, lay entirely in the hands of the Dominicans of Cologne; if these would acquit him, no one would condemn him. He should therefore make haste to recall his work for the Talmud and against Pfefferkorn. So much did Kollin write, without, however, mentioning a word by way of vindicating his lord and master Hoogstraten's joint authorship of the libelous work against Reuchlin.

Reuchlin answered both letters immediately (January 27, 1512,) thanking both the Faculty and Kollin for their mild procedure in his case. He confessed that as a layman—and that, too, one that had been married twice—he was ignorant in theological matters. He cleared himself of the suspicion that he favored the Jews; on the contrary, like St. Jerome, he thoroughly hated the Jewish race. But in the principal matter at issue, he was firm and unwavering. He could not recant, he wrote, as he had not written any thing heretical, but had even of his own accord corrected and explained the obnoxious passages in the Latin appendix to his work; all he could do, would be to publish that explanation in German, that all might understand it—which, for want of time, he had been unable to do ere this; while a new explanation would be as unsatisfactory to the faculty as his first one was. He therefore begged his Dominican friends to clearly specify the obnoxious passages in his Ocular Mirror supposed to be of a heretical character; then he would be able either to clear himself entirely of the imputation of heresy, or to recant.

At length the zealous ignorants of Cologne, to put an end to the tedious correspondence, made known their ultimatum (February 24). Reuchlin was to see to it, that the copies still on hand, of his work in favor of the Jews and the Talmud, should not be offered for sale at the next fair of Frankfort, and, in short, to revoke the general tenor of the sentiments therein contained. In this way alone he would re-establish his reputation, and prove to be a true Catholic and an enemy of the Jews and their blasphemous works. Otherwise he would be summoned to give an account before the inquisition of Cologne, and run the risk of being condemned—a thing which they alleged would be done, not from a spirit of hostility toward him, but rather from pure Christian love. They also touched Reuchlin's weak side, by intimating that, in case there should be a stay of proceedings in the matter at issue during his lifetime, inquisitors would not be wanting after his demise, who, no longer afraid of the living lion, would insult his memory and brand him as a heretic. His hypocritical friend Kollin wrote to him at the same time, saying, that for this forbearance on the part of the faculty he was solely in-

debted to his own friendly intercession, else they would have already written to all the bishops of Germany to hunt up all the copies of the Ocular Mirror and burn them, and summon the author himself to appear at the tribunal of the inquisition. Kollin therefore advises him to hasten and comply with the demand of the faculty, lest they proceed with rigor against him. Kollin, by the way, gave him to understand that some passages in his Ocular Mirror can be construed to mean that Jesus was lawfully and judicially condemned to death by the Jews. What a blasphemy! It would indeed grieve him sorely, were Reuchlin to end a glorious life thus disgraced (condemned as a heretic). He also intimated to him in what form he was to express his recantation—namely, that as a jurist he was ignorant in matters of theology, and consequently excusable if he erred. (Ibid. Nos. 17 and 18.)

As soon as the Dominicans dropped the mask of friendship, and appeared in their repulsive form as priests anxious to offer human sacrifices, Reuchlin also flung to the wind the mask of humility, showing himself a man of courageous daring, unwilling to surrender a particle of his honor. On the 3d of March following he wrote to the Faculty of Cologne, saying that he could not comply with their request to destroy with his own hand the still existing copies of his Ocular Mirror, they being the property of the bookseller. Nor could he, though he possessed the double mind of a Daniel, make any further explanation that would satisfy them. He would, however, publish his Latin explanation in German, for the benefit of the weak-minded who might misconstrue his words in reference to the Talmudic writings. He also wrote to the hypocrite Kollin, telling him what he would not say directly to the faculty. Not he, but the faculty, ought to thank him (Kollin) for his advice to delay the burning of the Ocular Mirror, they alone having thereby received a most important favor; for he was firmly convinced—and that by the advice and aid of experienced and influential men—that the wealth and reputation of his opponents were in greater danger than his own; nay, he was not without the support of the most potent officers in the State. He also gave his opponents to understand that a controversy, though easily begun, is not so easily settled. What a powerful commotion would be created among the nobility and the people, were he, with eloquent tongue, to explain the beginning, continuation and end of these contentions! "What would the people say, were I to tell them that you support, favor and raise to the skies that revolutionary renegade, the married layman, the unprincipled calumniator, the baptized Jew, who, contrary to the law of the Church, preached against me in Frankfort, before an assembly of the faithful, who is even suspected of intending to return to his former brethren-in-faith? That fellow has instigated all these troubles for no other purpose but that of extorting

large sums of money from the Jews. You take offence at some innocent words which I have written, and believe that they have hurt the feelings of pious hearts; and do you not abhor such despicable deeds? The many poets and historians of the present day, who revere me as their teacher, will follow my powerful protectors, and consign the malignity of my opponents and of your University to everlasting infamy, while they will laud my name as the innocent victim of persecution." (Ibid. Nos. 19 and 20.)

SECTION XII.

The chief of the humanists thus openly declared war against the principal representatives of that bigoted Catholicism which was opposed to all science and public enlightenment. A compromise was no more possible. For neither of these parties appreciated the language of the other. Reuchlin still acted with some forbearance. He only published in the German language (March 22, 1512,) forty-two articles, which he had previously appended to his *Ocular Mirror*, in order to modify some of his assertions that were rather vaguely expressed. It was to convince the public that he was not guilty of any heresy, and that he had in no form or manner favored the Jews. But this publication, so far from pacifying the Dominicans of Cologne, only exasperated them the more. Their intention was to wage war to the bitter end, and either disable or slay their opponent. They published, in response, a bill of indictment, with the title, "The Articles or Propositions concerning the great favor shown the Jews by Reuchlin." It contained nothing but a base rehash of all previous assertions of Pfefferkorn and the Dominicans, a tedious repetition of all real or apparent points of indictment against Reuchlin and the Jews, or, strictly speaking, only a copy of Reuchlin's own objections. The main charges were, that Reuchlin, though only a jurist, had dared to express an opinion on the subtleties of theology—a subject of which he, on account of his lay character, could have no knowledge—and that he, in a spirit of partiality obvious to all, selected the good traits and features of the Jews and their literature, without alluding to their bad characteristics—nay, even offering an excuse for the latter. The upshot of the whole was, that Reuchlin persisted in an error bordering on heresy, and that the Talmud must be burned.

This, the first bill of charges on the part of the Dominicans of Cologne, devoid of all taste in its form of expression, and, for the most part, devoid also of all truthfulness—except in the assertion that Reuchlin himself had formerly uttered the same charges against the Jews and their literature—was written by Arnold de Tongern; to which the official poet of the Dominican faculty, Ortuin Gratius, added some bad verses, in which he condemns Reuchlin to the infernal regions, expressing among other things

the pious wish, "May the wicked author of such mischief go to perdition!"

Arnold de Tongern dedicated this libellous work to the Emperor, and, in an introductory letter to the same, explained the motives which prompted the composition thereof, to-wit: because many Christians took umbrage at the manifest partiality displayed toward the Jews on the part of Reuchlin—particularly as his writings were composed in German, and read by every body—and because the Jews exultingly boasted that Reuchlin was raised for them by the Lord to frustrate the proceedings instituted by the Emperor against their literature. The bill of indictment, though, without any foundation in truth, nevertheless made an impression upon the Emperor; so much so, that he took part against Reuchlin now, after having been in his favor ever since the publication of Pfefferkorn's treacherous "Hand-mirror." Perhaps the same female hand again fanned the flame of persecution, or, perhaps, the Emperor was anxious to subdue the ever-increasing excitement. Maximilian accordingly, during his presence in Cologne, (October 7, 1512,) issued an order to the several officers of the realm, and especially to the Burgmaster and Council of the city of Frankfort, to prohibit the sale of Reuchlin's works in favor of the Jews, and either confiscate or suppress the remaining copies of the same, on pain of incurring his imperial displeasure and punishment. The motive of this order is stated to be, because the Jews, by this their defence on the part of Reuchlin, were only more confirmed in their natural obduracy, while plain, simple-minded Christians were sorely provoked thereby. Among the latter Maximilian might have classed himself; for, beside him, there were but few who took offence at the strife and contention. Those, of course, who foresaw the future bearing of this controversy, rejoiced at the bold opposition of Reuchlin against the impudence of Pfefferkorn and his coadjutors of Cologne. But they were all nevertheless far from being favorably inclined to the Jews. Philipp, the Elector and Archbishop of Cologne, who was on the most excellent terms with the Dominicans of his capital, made haste in publishing this imperial mandate, (November 27, 1512.) He wrote to all the clergy of his bishopric, requesting them to read the same from the pulpit, and to post it conspicuously on all church-doors. Refractory subjects, that would not give up Reuchlin's works against Pfefferkorn, were to incur the penalty of excommunication.

But this strict order of the Emperor, confirmed by the Elector, utterly failed in accomplishing the desired effect. In Cologne even Reuchlin had more cause for rejoicing than the Dominicans, the latter having rendered themselves totally odious by the noisy arrogance and cruel spirit of their chief, Hoogstraten. Here the learned and refined provost of the cathedral, *Hermann de Nuenar*, defended Reuchlin and the Talmud, because he regarded Hoogstraten as

the most malicious of men and the only public agitator in Germany. He wrote subsequently to the Emperor: "Hoogstraten is the very plague of Germany, and if you would render him harmless, order would soon be restored throughout. Inquire of any of the learned in Germany, and you will learn that he has offended them all, and been hostile to them all." Nearly all the higher classes of Cologne took sides with Reuchlin against the Dominicans, except one man, who, it was then whispered, lived on terms of rather too great intimacy with Pfefferkorn's spruce little wife. (Reuchlin's Letters II, Nos. 40 and 42.) A warm partisan of Reuchlin, *Francis Struss*, a rich but illiterate man, in spite of the imperial mandate and the electoral threat of excommunication, always carried the "Ocular Mirror" in his pocket, and read it so frequently, that he knew the whole book by heart. Undaunted, he would use the same with telling effect upon the Dominicans, was ever ready with an answer to their objections, causing them to avoid his company. Thus, through the very machinations of the enemies of the Jews, it came so far that the Talmud found advocates among the refined circles of Christians.

The more ground the Dominicans lost day by day in the estimation of the public, the more they exerted themselves in applying all the artifices at their command to influence the latter. Pfefferkorn (or one of his whispering parasites) published still another work, in which Reuchlin is no longer treated as a high dignitary, but as an abandoned fellow, forging nothing but falsehoods and intrigues, and corrupted by bribes from the Jews. His "Opinion" on the Talmud and his "Ocular Mirror" are called blasphemous. The very title well characterizes the abject meanness of the author, namely: "*Brand-mirror*, to banish and obliterate a blasphemous book, Ocular Mirror, which Reuchlin published against me, Pfefferkorn." In it the author spits flame and fire against the Jews more even than against Reuchlin. In the introductory poem he tells us, in jingling rhyme, that he has written this book without fear or favor, in order to subdue the wanton spirit of the Jews, "who ever attack the divine honor" of Christianity. He ardently wishes that they were compelled to engage in hard, menial labor, to work like slaves, that they might have no inclination to indulge in blasphemies against the Church. He consigns to the hands of the devil whatever Christian is favorably disposed to them. Reuchlin, of course, comes in for a large portion of the odium attaching to the Jews. He is denounced as an arrogant and impudent man for daring to classify and characterize the various kinds of Jewish literature, he not being able to read the Rabbinical Hebrew without vowel-points. Nay, he would not even understand his own Hebrew dictionary, if it were not accompanied with a Latin translation. All his Hebrew learning he acquired solely

through the aid and advice of the Jews. The latter, as a matter of course, fare still worse in the "*Brand-mirror*." In this work Pfefferkorn invented still another falsehood, namely: that even Maimonides, this Jewish sage distinguished for his ideal morality and humanity, in his religious codex prescribed the manner of killing Christians. He had the audacity to declare his readiness to prove this to the satisfaction of all his opponents, and, in case of his failing to do so, to undergo any and every punishment—aye, even to stand in the midst of fire. This forger of falsehoods might well thus challenge the world, feeling assured that the almighty protection which he enjoyed at the hands of the Dominicans would prevent any one from taking him at his word. He denied the charge of Reuchlin against his desiring to investigate the people, in spite of the authorities, to maltreat the Jews. Yet, in the very same breath he incites them to the most cruel persecutions. The Jews should not, indeed, be slain, he remarks, but they should be deprived of their property, to be given to those who were more deserving, or to hospitals, churches and monasteries. The aged Jews should be treated like dirty dogs, and their young children should be forcibly seized and baptized. There should be no procrastination in this matter—it should be done forthwith. It was no sin to treat them thus, they being like purchased property at the disposal of the authorities. There were but three large Jewish congregations in the German Empire, namely: at Ratisbon, Worms and Frankfurt. If the princes, rulers and municipal authorities were to proceed with these, as has been done in the case of the other congregations, the Jews in Germany would soon disappear. And this, "according to the holy faith, would be godlike and praiseworthy." How debased must have been that Christianity, which a blood-thirsty, revengeful, malignant renegade could thus invoke, to preach the most horrid cruelties against the witnesses of his former outrages!

SECTION XIII.

But Pfefferkorn's part was played out. The Dominicans of Cologne having commenced to wage open war against Reuchlin, and succeeded in procuring an interdict of the sale of his work, Reuchlin's just and glowing anger was directed entirely against them. He wrote, with overwhelming force, an elaborate defence in Latin against the "*Calumniators*" of Cologne (completed March 1, 1513,) addressing the same to the Emperor. It was evidently calculated for the non-German speaking world of scholars, having, however, a German title, namely: "Whoever writes or says that I, Reuchlin, in the matter relating to the books of the Jews, acted otherwise than as an upright, pious Christian gentleman, that man lies like an unworthy, unprincipled, frivolous knave." In this work to "un-

mask the Calumniators," he makes but a few allusions, in passing, to Pfefferkorn, in order to describe his offence against the Emperor himself, in that he broke open a document designed solely for the Emperor, and published the same for calumniating purposes—an offence for which he deserved the gallows. His principal attack was directed against the originators of these troubles and mean intrigues. Unmercifully he crushes Arnold de Tongern, Ortuin Gratius, mentioning them by name, and the ringleader of all, Hoogstraten, though only indirectly alluding to the latter. He charges them with none but selfish motives of gain in their fanatical proceedings against Jewish books, and that they persecuted and anathematized him, simply because he frustrated their evil designs and snatched from their hands the booty they deemed already safe in their possession. They by no means deserved the honorable title of *theologians*, they being only *theologists*. Why, he asks, do the men of Cologne only so zealously engage in this question concerning Jewish literature? Why not any other theological faculties of Germany? Strictly speaking, the question did not concern their tribunal at all, but concerned only the bishops. "Who," he indignantly exclaims, "has given you calumniating theologists the shepherd-staff in hand to rule over me? Who has made you judges over me and my opinions, I being at a distance of almost five bishoprics from you, not breathing the same air with you, nor sharing the same fire? Such is their haughty temper, that, with the devil in their heart, they would fain ascend the height of the clouds, and place themselves on a level with the Most High! Permit them, O, Emperor, to take and keep the money of the Jews, and they will let me alone." The Jews, he continues, immigrated into the Roman realm in the time of Pompey, long before the birth of Christ. Cæsar, Augustus and Tiberius permitted them to live according to their own rites and usages, and observe their inherited laws. The Christian Emperors, Valentinian and Theodosius, conferred upon them the full rights of citizenship, and the Emperor Honorius promised them the same protection, defence and security. "Thou alone, the first German Sovereign of the Roman Empire, I beseech thee, permit the Dominicans of Cologne to summon the Jews before their inquisitorial tribunal, to crush and pillage them, and let them know it, that it is through my intercession that they have the privilege of filling their sacks with the money of the Jews, then they will gladly make amends for the injury they have done me, and no more regard my sentiments as scandalous and heretical. But so long as thou wilt not permit them to do this, they will—believe me—bark incessantly against me, and charge me with having received favors from the Jews, and that I do not speak with sufficient reverence of theological writers, that is, of the theologists of Cologne."

As to his opponents who occupied the foreground, Reuchlin literally crushed them in argument, dealing them the heaviest blows. "The Dominicans, says he, have selected Arnold de Tongern to be their leader—a man who prefers to be styled thus and not 'of Tongern,' he having been banished from his native city on account of some crime he had committed. Even his colleagues call him a secular priest, that the Order might not be held responsible for his disgraceful conduct. This banner-bearer is accompanied on the one side by a semi-Jew (Pfefferkorn) and on the other by a semi-Heathen (Ortuin Gratius), the latter pretending to be a poet, who writes verses after the manner of the Heathens, without even understanding the rules of orthography." The reason of his calling Ortuin a semi-heathen was, because in his introductory poem the latter speaks of the "immaculate virgin" as being the "*mother of Jupiter*." Now, the teachers of the Catholic church argued Jupiter, like all the other gods of Heathenism, as evil demons. Ortuin consequently, says Reuchlin, relating upon the eager heretic-hunters, was guilty of blasphemy and heresy.

In reference to the principal charge of Arnold de Tongern, the hobby-horse of the Dominicans—viz: that Reuchlin has proved to be a patron of the Jews—he boldly admits that he has espoused their cause; but so did Jesus, the Apostles, the fathers of the Church, the popes and the emperors. The judges, too, in case of law-suits between Jews and Christians take their fact in so far as to prohibit them from injustice. [This, however, was not always the case; as is evident from certain documents of the 15th century. Some judges entertained conscientious scruples about deciding in favor of a Jew when engaged in a law-suit with a Christian; so much so that the Emperor Frederic had to consult the pope, who then decided that it was no sin.] He, too, had defended them, that no wrong nor violence might be done them." I know, he says, that my opponents think hard of me for declaring that the Jews are our fellow-citizens. Well, then let them rave still more and boil over with rage when I declare: the Jews are our *brethren*!—yea, brethren of Arnold, brethren of the theologists of Cologne; not because they have the same Creator, but because we are descended from the same progenitor as they; this being the opinion even of some of the fathers of the Church.

With the most telling effect Reuchlin furthermore overwhelmed Arnold on account of his perversion of Scripture, "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live," (Exod. 22, 8,) Arnold interpreted "Thou shalt not suffer an evil-doer to live on earth, and from this made the following inference: "Inasmuch as the Jews have committed many evil deeds, deriding and blaspheming Christ, the Church and the Holy Scriptures, they should not be permitted to live in any nook or corner of the earth."—"O, exclaims Reuchlin with just indignation, how un-

worthy this remark of a theologian, how unworthy of a priest after human blood!"

In regard to the inconsistency with which Pfefferkorn and Arnold reproached him, in that he himself had formerly in a letter to a nobleman, written in a spirit hostile to the Jews, Reuchlin endeavored to evade this by all sorts of logical sophisms, admitting however that he was wrong then. On the whole, ever since his public rupture with the Dominicans, he vigorously espoused the cause of the Jews in every respect. In opposition to those who assert that the Jews pray for the destruction of the Roman Empire, he quotes a saying of the Talmud, which inculcates the duty of praying for the welfare of the realm, and continues thus: "Why does the calumniator bring baptized Jews and their accomplices as witnesses against the Jews? Shall I believe *them*, those who forge such manifest falsehoods against me? If they are guilty of such mendacity against me, a Christian, what would they not do against the Jews!"—At the close of his work he sets his calumniator a monument in the following words: "Arnold of Tongern, slanderer and falsifier for all times!"

Reuchlin handed his defense to the Emperor in person, who received it graciously. This defense, which was soon widely diffused through the press, was the first vigorous, effective stroke of a giant against one of the heads of the venomous hydra, resounding through all Christian Europe. To provoke the powerful Dominicans, whom even Popes and Emperors feared,—to tread upon and even wound these serpents in one of their most dangerous dens, caused him to be applauded and admired by the most diverse dupes, not merely by the humanists and temporal officers, but also by the higher and lower orders of the secular clergy, who bore reluctantly the tyranny of the monks and friars; by the other orders who were after thrown into the shade by the arrogance of the Dominicans, and in particular, by the officers of the Imperial Court, whose plans were often frustrated by their intolerable interference. The Ciceronian diction, the profound indignation, spontaneously manifested therein, the irony, all, even the learned quotations from classical, biblical and ecclesiastical literature—the seeming ballast of the work—the puns and witticisms agreeable to the taste of the age, was all calculated to make an impression, the more so, as Reuchlin was known to be no ruffian, but on the contrary a quiet, mild, peaceable man. The humanists were charmed with his bold attack upon the ignorants. Only the timid among them censured his vehemence and boldness. But Reuchlin very properly remarked in reference to these, that one could more easily, with philosophical composure, suffer the penalty of death, than brook an attack upon one's honor.

The strife between Reuchlin and the Dominicans, after this publication, assumed only a more violent form. Maximilian, to whom both parties applied with their liter-

ary productions, was not able to settle the controversy. It was in this very affair that he manifested an extraordinary degree of imbecility and indecision. Now he would listen to the persuasive tones of his confessor, now to those of his liberal-minded Secretary; and, according as he was influenced by either, he would, on one occasion, write encouragingly to Reuchlin, promising to protect him from the wanton hostility of the Dominicans of Cologne, and on another, issue a mandate, ordering the suppression of Reuchlin's Defense. At last he commanded both parties to refrain from any further controversy (June 1513); But the quarrel could no longer be subdued. The Dominicans could not with Christian humility brook the defeat they had suffered. All their influence, that is, their very existence was at stake. They, therefore, devised some decisive mode of revenge; but through their devices they were only the more entangled in their own snares, bringing contempt upon themselves and the Catholic Church.

SECTION XIV.

Up to this time the chief originator of the entire scandal, the malignant grand inquisitor *Jacob Hoogstraten*, had remained in the rear sending only his creatures, one after another, into the fire, first Pfefferkorn, and then Ortuin Gratus and Arnold de Tongern. Henceforth he himself advanced to the front; and that, with an assumption of power so arrogant, as if all, both temporal and spiritual officers, were bound to bow before him, and sink to the dust before the movement of his eye-brows, acting as if he had the right to trample upon all laws and usages. In order forcibly to restore the now weakened influence of their order, all the Dominicans had to make common cause, and exert all their zeal to effect the condemnation of Reuchlin and the Talmud. The struggle was thus extended over a wide field; it concerned the entire Dominican order.

Authorized, as he alleged, by the Provincial of the order, Hoogstraten as inquisitor, suddenly summoned Reuchlin (Sept. 15, 1513) to appear before him within the next six days in Mayence, at eight o'clock in the morning, to be tried for favoring the Jews and expressing heretical sentiments. Now, Hoogstraten had no inquisitorial jurisdiction over Reuchlin, the latter belonging to the bishopric of Constance. His summons was without all the formalities of law, and written, too, in language so insulting, as if Reuchlin were already convicted of the charges against him and condemned as a heretic, towards whom consequently there was no necessity of observing any marks of courtesy or regard. Reuchlin might, if he chose, have utterly disregarded the summons, it being in every particular contrary to law. Nevertheless, being too aged and feeble to appear in person, he sent an attorney to Mayence, in order to protest against this arbitrary

proceeding. On the day appointed (Sept. 20,) Hoogstraten with a company of Dominicans held a meeting, selected from among them some partisan judges as a commission, opened the session and appeared at once as plaintiff and judge. He had previously written an elaborate accusation against Reuchlin's "Ocular Mirror" and the Talmud. He had also cautiously looked around for confederates, that he might not stand alone in this serious quarrel. He had written to all the German Universities, soliciting them to give their opinion on Reuchlin's work—favorable for his own purposes, of course. Most of them were in accordance with his expectations. The theological faculty of *Louvain* had declared that, to oblige Hoogstraten, they had examined the "Ocular Mirror" and found that it was full of errors, suspicious assertions, and that, in particular, it encouraged the stubborn unbelief of the Jews; that it was therefore not merely to be withdrawn from the public, but even burned—what the opinion of the deanery of *Cologne* was, may be easily imagined, Hoogstraten being himself dean of the same. What the faculty of *Louvain* dared not express, that of *Cologne* asserted—viz. that Reuchlin's work contains not merely errors, but also *heresies*; that it was therefore to be burned at the stake, and obliterated from the memory of man. The faculty of *Erfurt* referred to their former unfavorable opinion on the Talmud and Jewish literature, but candidly admitted that they had found nothing heretical or anti-Catholic in Reuchlin's work; only that he had inadvertently written some errors and things favorable to the Jews. The book, however, they thought, ought to be destroyed, but without casting any reproach upon the author who is known to be orthodox. The University of *Heidelberg* alone, probably on account of the proximity of Reuchlin, refrained from giving any opinion. Strange to say, the Faculty of *Mayence*, also, failed giving their opinion. But, with the three favorable opinions on his side, Hoogstraten appeared at *Mayence* with arrogant assumption of being infallible and sure of victory.

The charges which he proffered were the same, of course, which Pfefferkorn and Arnold de Tongern had already made against the *Ocular Mirror*—that Reuchlin favors the Jews too much; "regards them—those impudent dogs" as possessing the same rights as members of the church; and that his work breathes the spirit of heresy. Hoogstraten therefore proposed that the inquisitorial commission, pronounce a sentence to this effect; that Reuchlin's *Ocular Mirror*, being full of errors and heresies, too partial towards the infidel Jews, and offensive to the Church, should be condemned, suppressed and consigned to the flames. A *Tarquemade* or a *Ximenes* de *Cisneros* would have acted with less ceremony, he thought, but condemned the author together with his book to the stake. But there was a great difference between a German and a Spanish Inquisition; and,

though Hoogstraten's heart was hard enough to pronounce so severe a sentence, yet he dared not do so, for all Germany, both spiritual and temporal authorities, would have opposed him.

Reuchlin's counsel protested solemnly and energetically against Hoogstraten's accusation, showing the utter injustice of the same, particularly as the latter, who had always assumed a hostile attitude against Reuchlin, appeared at once as plaintiff and judge, even though as judge he had no jurisdiction whatever over Reuchlin. As was to be expected, the inquisitor and the Commission he had appointed paid no regard to this protest. Reuchlin's counsel, therefore, had no other course left but to appeal to the Papal Chair, his proposition to have the question at issue decided by two umpires having been also rejected. The trial against Reuchlin's "Ocular Mirror" was continued nevertheless, notwithstanding neither the accused nor his counsel (who had left the court) was present; only Hoogstraten had so much sense of propriety as to retire from the judicial bench. However, he resorted to other modes of proceeding, in order to insure the success of his cause. Having through some artifice been empowered by the Emperor to appoint a special committee of investigation, he selected none but followers of *Thomas Aquinas* and opponents of Reuchlin's views, who accelerated the legal procedure, in order only to arrive at a speedy condemnation. But to avoid outraging public opinion, and being charged with having condemned the accused without a hearing, they posted on the doors of all churches a sort of summons (Sept. 26,) addressed, not directly to Reuchlin, but "to all those whom it may concern," ordering them to appear next day at three o'clock in the afternoon. At the appointed hour the committee met, and Hoogstraten again read the bill of indictment against Reuchlin and the Talmud. To observe the semblance of law, the judges of the inquisition examined witnesses—all Dominicans of course—and were unanimous in the condemnation of the "Ocular Mirror." On the day following the final sentence of the inquisitors was to be made public, and already the announcement was made in the churches, that all persons possessing a copy of the work should deliver the same, on pain of excommunication, into the hands of the inquisition. Thus by implication the Talmud, too, and all other Jewish works, not even excepting the Hebrew Scriptures perhaps, would have been condemned. The Dominicans of *Cologne* exulted in the prospect of attaining at last their object. But their buoyant expectations were doomed to disappointment.

Public indignation was growing stronger day by day against a trial so unjustly begun and so wilfully conducted without regard to all forms of law. The liberal students of the University of *Mayence*, not yet contaminated with the corrupt theology of the times, nor yet misled by the system

of scholasticism, expressed their indignation loudly and emphatically against this shameless procedure on the part of the inquisition, enlisted the sympathies of the professors of jurisprudence, influencing men of prominence to join them in their protest. Some distinguished members of the Archiepiscopal Chapter, particularly the Dean *Lorenz de Truchsess*, applied in person—neither Reuchlin nor his counsel having been heard—to persuade the grand inquisitor to postpone pronouncing the sentence, until all attempts to make a compromise should fail. Hoogstraten, though far from being disposed to adjust the matter amicably, nevertheless consented to extend the term a fortnight, presuming that Reuchlin would be ashamed to appear before him. The Chapter in the mean time wrote to Reuchlin, strongly urging him not to fail appearing before the expiration of the term. Great was the anxiety and suspense of many as to what would be the result of this trial.

To the great surprise of the Dominicans the now aged, venerable Reuchlin came to Mayence, accompanied by two distinguished counsellors of the Duke of Wirtemberg. The Chapter took great pains to effect a compromise. Hoogstraten however, anxious to behold the lurid flames, of the stake, would not consent to any amicable agreement, but procrastinated till the 12th of October, the final day of the term, on which, if no compromise should be effected, the decision sentence was to be pronounced. Already the grand inquisitor had issued orders to all the clergy of Mayence, to announce from their several pulpits that all, Christians as well as Jews, shall, on pain of incurring severe penalties, deliver all copies of the “Ocular Mirror” to be burned at the stake. Besides people were promised indulgence for three hundred days, if they would on the day appointed assemble at the church-square to witness the autoda-fé and render the scene imposing by their being present *en masse*. On the 12th of October, accordingly, the square in front of the church was crowded with spectators, who had come there from curiosity or sympathy, or were in need of indulgence. Inflated with pride and arrogance the Fathers and Brethren of the Dominican Order and the theologians of the Universities of Cologne, Louvain and Erfurt, who had been invited for the occasion, marched in procession to the rostrum which had been erected for the purpose, and “the earth shook beneath their feet.” Hoogstraten, who had so far acted as plaintiff, now took his seat again among the judges. Already they were on the point of pronouncing the imprecatory formula, and causing the fire to be kindled, when a messenger from Archbishop Uriel hastened to the spot, with a letter in his hand, bidding their lips silence.

The Chapter, particularly the Dean de Truchsess, had informed the Archbishop of the obstinate malice of the Dominicans against Reuchlin, which frustrated every attempt to effect a compromise. Now Uriel

de Memmingen, like most bishops of his day, was governed more by worldly than ecclesiastical inclinations, and, though by no means friendly to the Jews, harbored no canonical fanaticism against them. He had, for instance, permitted them to settle again in the archbishopric of Mayence (with the exception of the city of Mayence itself), his predecessor having ignominiously banished them. He had but recently, (Julv, 1513) appointed a Rabbi over them, *Beifuss* by name, who was also a physician, assigning him a domicile in Wiesenau, near Mayence. He had invested this Rabbi with power to decide all law suits in the Congregation according to the rabbinical law, to inflict punishment on all transgressors, and, in general, to perform all such functions as come within the sphere of a Jewish grand master. He had not, indeed expressed himself in favor of the Jewish literature; still he had not taken any active steps against it. He, too, was indignant at the arrogance of the Dominicans of Cologne, and their unjust proceedings against Reuchlin. He, therefore dispatched a letter to the Commissioners selected from his Chapter, ordering them to postpone the final sentence one month, till another attempt to bring about a reconciliation was made; but if they should not consent to this, they were by this letter divested of their authority to act as inquisitorial judges, and whatever they had decided so far was null and void. Stupefied with amazement the Dominicans heard the notary reading aloud this letter, which frustrated all their evil machinations. Hoogstraten alone ventured to indulge in some insolent remarks about being deprived of rights. The other compeers sneaked away in disgrace, followed by the jeers of the mob and the cries: “Would that their brethren were condemned to the stake, who would heap such indignity upon a man of honor!”

The malignant Hoogstraten made another desperate attempt. He urged the theological Faculty of Mayence to no longer delay their opinion on the question at issue, and they at length declared that Reuchlin's work was full of errors, and contained much in favor of the Jews and partaking of heresy. Hoogstraten then gave notice of an appeal to the Pope, though at the time when Reuchlin proposed such appeal, he scornfully rejected it. After mature deliberation, however, he gave up the idea of appealing to the Pope. So Reuchlin, the defender of the Jews and their literature, came forth victorious from the long, severe struggle.

Reuchlin's triumph was the occasion of great rejoicing among the educated classes in Germany. *Hermann von Busch*, the missionary of liberal education (as he is appropriately called by a celebrated author of the present age), and *Ulrich von Hutten*, the champion of truth and justice, soon afterward celebrated his success in an enthusiastic hymn, entitled, “The Triumph of Reuchlin.”

"Exult in the knowledge of thyself—yes, rejoice, O, my Germany!"

This is the burden of the song. Germany was to open her eyes and welcome the conqueror of the malicious Dominicans with a magnificent triumph on his return to his fatherland; or, as the poetic fiction reads: Germania's sons and daughters, decked in beautiful array, with garlands and wreaths of flowers and voluptuous music, extend a noble, glorious reception to the immortal Reuchlin. Hoogstraten is led in the triumphal procession—he, the most dangerous enemy, is now fettered in chains, "the ugly *freman*, whose constant cry is: Away with all authors and their works—into the fire! It matters not whether thou writest what is true or false, just or unjust, he has always *fire* ready for thee. He eats fire, lives on it, and spits flames." His accomplices also, Ortuin Gratius, Arnold Tongern and Pfefferkorn, are dragged in chains. The last-mentioned in particular, as the arch-rascal of the whole crowd, receives the most merciless treatment. He is delivered into the hands of two executioners; his tongue is torn out by the roots, "that he may not utter any thing accursed in the triumphal march;" his nose and ears are cut off; with his face to the ground, and amidst other indignities and tortures he is dragged in the dust. "O, horrible, inhuman!" Arnold Tongern indignantly exclaims, on beholding this cruel treatment, to which the poet replies: "More horrible, methinks, your vices were, which ye, in bold defiance, did perpetrate;"

That the Jews, also, greatly rejoiced over the issue of this inquisitorial trial, may be easily conceived. For was not their own existence most concerned in the result? If Reuchlin's "Ocular Mirror" had been condemned, no Christian, however humane and benevolent, would have thenceforth ventured to take their part, unless he were willing to expose himself, as a patron of the Jews, to the suspicion of heresy and the punishment of the Church. Besides with the condemnation of Reuchlin's work, the literature of the Jews would have been also declared heretical. The Dominicans of that day relate that the Rabbis of Germany, in consequence of this (to them) favorable result, held a synod at Worms, and regarded the discomfiture of the hostile Dominicans as a prelude to the fall of the entire Roman (papal) Empire. If this be true, they certainly gave evidence of prophetic vision. It was also reported that Reuchlin held secret intercourse with rabbis.

SECTION XV.

Reuchlin, however, was as yet far from being able to triumph successfully over his enemies. Though humiliated for the time being, they were far from being vanquished. He knew their cunning and malice too well, to allow himself to remain inactive in the enjoyment of his triumph.

He knew full well that they would now renew the attack with redoubled zeal. He, too, therefore hastened to give notice of an appeal to the Pope, in order to silence his exasperated enemies. But Reuchlin justly apprehended that, considering the unreliable and venal character of the Papal Government, his cause might suffer, if the investigation should be held outside his jurisdiction under the influence of the Dominicans of Cologne. He therefore applied to *Bonet de Lates*, the Jewish physician of Pope Leo X, and, in a letter written in Hebrew, solicited the aid of his influence with the Pope in his behalf.*

Leo X, of the illustrious Florentine family of the Medici, of whom his father said that he was the most sagacious of all his sons, had ascended the papal chair but a few months previous to the conflict between Reuchlin and the Dominicans. He was a high-bred gentleman and more of a Roman heathen than a Catholic Christian; he cared more for politics than religion, and from his Olympian height looked down with contempt upon theological controversies as upon childish plays. His sole concern was to sail back and forth between the two hostile states or rather houses of Hapsburg and Valois, without endangering the temporal interests of the papacy. With a frankness that would surprise the present generation he could well declare: "It is well known how much the fable of Christ has benefited us and our kin." (*Quantum nobis nostrisque illa de Christo fabula profuerit omnibus seculis, notum est.*) Now, this pope was called upon to decide whether Reuchlin's "Ocular Mirror" breathed the spirit of heresy, and whether it favored the Jews according to or above their deserts. Leo, who occupied the papal chair at a time when theological questions threatened to set all Europe on fire, was perhaps as little conversant with the question at issue as his work. His decision consequently would depend mainly on the light in which the controversy between Reuchlin and the Dominicans was presented to him. Reuchlin, therefore, begged the physician of the pope, *Bonet de Lates*, who was a constant visitor of the papal court, in whose hands the "body of his Holiness" was committed, to persuade Leo not to allow the investigation to be instituted at Cologne or in the vicinity thereof; since in that case his cause would be lost. He related to him the entire course of the controversy from its very beginning, telling him how Pfefferkorn and the Dominicans of Cologne had conspired against the Talmud, and that his extraordinary efforts alone saved the literature of the Jews from destruction. If the Dominicans had got possession of this letter and read it, they would have been able to offer the most valid proof of Reuchlin's friendly disposition to the Jews; for in that letter he admitted many a thing which he had publicly controverted.

*The entire letter is printed, in the original Hebrew, in the notes appended to the Author's History.—TRANSLATOR.

It is to be presumed, of course, that Bonet de Lates used his influence with the pope in behalf of Reuchlin. To his zeal, no doubt, is to be attributed the fact that Leo so soon thereafter (November 21, 1513) issued a "brief" addressed to the bishops of Spire and Worms, that they or their delegates should investigate the matter in dispute between Reuchlin and Hoogstraten, and that they alone, to the exclusion of every other tribunal, should pronounce the sentence; to which sentence the defeated party should yield implicit obedience. The bishop of Worms, a *Dahlberg*, with whom Reuchlin was on very intimate terms, declined the commission. The young bishop of Spire, then, George, count palatine and duke of Bavaria, appointed two judges, *Thomas Truchsess* and *Schwalbach* who summoned both parties to appear before their tribunal in Spire within the space of one month. Reuchlin promptly appeared, accompanied by his proctor and other friends. Hoogstraten, however, relying upon the power of the Dominicans, did not present himself, nor did he send a satisfactory attorney. He publicly expressed his contempt for this commission, the bishop and even the people.

The judges at first did not conduct the trial with sufficient energy. They seemed to lack courage to prosecute the case fully, dreading, perhaps, the revenge of the Dominicans. The trial was thus protracted full three months (from January to April 1515). The Dominicans of Cologne even dared, on the ground of the sentence passed in Mayence (though it was not published but destroyed by the chief commissary), to burn publicly Reuchlin's "Ocular Mirror" in Cologne (Feb. 10.), while the trial was in progress before the tribunal of Spire acting by the authority of the pope. They seemed to have an irresistible longing for the flames of the stake. Hoogstraten subsequently exonerated himself by saying that not he but another inquisitor had ordered this public burning. But the boldness of the Dominicans did not stop there. They requested the impudent Pfefferkorn to post the condemnation of the "Ocular Mirror" as being "heretical, offensive and friendly to the Jews" in some conspicuous part of the court-room of Spire, to attract the notice of the very tribunal then and there in session; and it was only after considerable pains on the part of Reuchlin and his counsel that they succeeded in having the impertinent fellow rebuked for the act. In fact, Reuchlin had to exert all possible efforts to effect a final decision in the long protracted trial. It was only after he had published two essays in German on the matter in controversy itself and the cause of the trial, that the bishop of Spire deigned to take notice of the same and to pronounce the sentence, favorable to Reuchlin, to the effect, "That the 'Ocular Mirror' contained neither errors nor heresies; that it does not favor the Jews beyond what they deserve; that Hoogstraten consequently slandered the author and should,

therefore, be compelled to say no more on the subject; that Reuchlin's work may be read and printed by any and every body, and that Hoogstraten should bear the costs of the trial (111 Rhenish guilders)—which he was to pay within the time appointed by law—upon the failure of which he was to be liable to the lesser, and, in course of continued disobedience, to the greater ban.

SECTION XVI.

The Dominicans of Cologne gnashed their teeth, raged and raved like madmen on hearing, to their disgrace, the result of the trial; but they had no idea of submitting to the decision of the Apostolic Commissary. Such was the distracted state of affairs in Germany at the time, that it was difficult, even under ordinary circumstances, to execute the sentence of a judge; much more so was it in this case, when the sentence was in opposition to the wishes and inclinations of the powerful Dominicans. They ridiculed the judgment of the Bishop of Spire as if it were that of a stupid boy. When the hand-bills containing the same were posted up in the streets of Cologne, the impudent Pfefferkorn tore them down. Extrajudicially, that is, without even giving notice to the Bishop of Spire, then acting as apostolic judge, Hoogstraten appealed to the people; though on a former occasion he had rejected the proposition of such appeal. Notwithstanding his failure so far, he was sanguine in hopes of being successful in his suit against Reuchlin, and of seeing the Ocular Mirror condemned, basing his hopes on the well-known venality of the Roman Court. "In Rome, any thing can be obtained for money," he was known to say in public. "Reuchlin is poor, while the Dominicans are rich; justice, therefore, will have to succumb to gold." Hoogstraten, moreover, could depend on the aid of certain partizans among the Cardinals, who, like him, foamed with rage against all liberal education. These, he thought, would be able, at all events, so long to protract the proceedings, that Reuchlin's property would not be sufficient to defray the expenses. Besides, the Dominicans expected to obtain a sentence of condemnation against the Ocular Mirror from some Universities, particularly from that of Paris—the most prominent one of the time—and through this means exert a moral pressure upon the Papal Government. All the Dominicans, therefore, both in Germany and elsewhere, made common cause in their efforts to crush Reuchlin.

But these exertions on the part of the Dominicans had the effect of rousing also all the advocates of liberal education, the opponents of scholasticism, bigotry and ecclesiastical theology—of rousing, in short, the Humanists and uniting them for common action. A regular Order of Humanists, a so-called Reuchlinian party, ("*exercitus Reuchlinistarum*") was inaugurated in Western Europe, the members of which

silently co-operated with one another; and that, in behalf of Reuchlin. "The one assisted the other, and said to his associate: Take courage!" "We all, members of the army of Pallas, are not less devoted to Reuchlin than soldiers are to the Emperor." These and similar expressions occur in the letters of Reuchlin's friends. They constituted, in fact, a regular fraternity, whose members were actively engaged in enlisting new partizans for Reuchlin. Even in the little town of Oels, in Silesia, there lived a humanist, who took special pride in calling and signing himself a Reuchlinian. Thus, in consequence of the fierce animosity of Pfefferkorn against the Jews and the Talmud, there arose two parties in Christendom—the adherents of Reuchlin and those of Arnold—who were bitterly opposed to each other. There was a struggle between the dark phantoms of the Middle Ages and the bright, dawning light of a better age.

Foremost in the ranks of Reuchlin "young Germany" fought against the advocates of ignorance. Among them was the fiery Ulrich von Hutten, the most energetic, manly character of the day. His ardent longing for action was even stimulated to greater energy by the passionate feud between Reuchlin and the Dominicans. Hitherto his blows were vaguely dealt against phantoms in the air, and his chivalric daring and fiery genius displayed in combat with mere visionary opponents. Now, at length, the eyes of the youthful author were opened, and he perceived the real enemy, to challenge whom to mortal combat he considered worthy of his chivalric sword, and the still keener edge of his genius. To annihilate the Dominicans, the priests, the ignorants; to establish the realm of intellect, of science and philosophy; to deliver Germany from the nightmare of ecclesiastical superstition and barbarism, to elevate her from her humble position, and make her the umpire of Europe—an elevation for which her vigorous sons and daring knights seemed to qualify her—to accomplish *this* appeared to him as the goal for which he must contend. As soon as he was fully conscious of this aim, he zealously and indefatigably applied all the means at his command to attain it; lending his aid, first of all, to Reuchlin, who was looked upon as the banner of the liberty party, to enable him to conquer his deadly foes.

But not only men of lofty genius, but even men of high rank and distinction, one after another, took Reuchlin's part; such as Ulrich, Duke of Wirtemberg, and his entire court—Count von Helfenstein in Augsburg—the canonic Count von Nuenar—Weiser, Pirkeheimer and Pentinger, the patricians of Ratisbon, Nuremberg and Augsburg, together with all their adherents—many provosts, deans and prebendaries, even cardinals and eminent clergymen in Italy, particularly Egidio de Viterbo, the most eminent Commander of the Augustine Order in Rome (the patron and

pupil of the Jewish grammarian, Elias Levita,) who was so fond of the study of Hebrew literature, and was engaged in translating the Cabalistic work of the Sohar. This Egidio wrote to Reuchlin: "The Law, which was revealed to man in the midst of fire, was first rescued from the fire by Abraham, when he escaped from the glowing furnace (according to rabbinical tradition); and now it has been saved a second time from the fire by Reuchlin, he having defended from destruction those works which alone shed light upon the Law, and without which everlasting darkness would again prevail. In endeavoring to maintain thy cause, we do not defend thee, but the Law—not the Talmud, but the Church." It is also worthy of remark that the entire Order of Franciscan, impelled by hatred against the Dominicans, took Reuchlin's part.

In almost every considerable town there was a Reuchlinian and anti-Reuchlinian party—the agitation between the two being often so great as to result in a breach of the peace. The watch-word of the one party was, "The salvation of the Ocular Mirror and preservation of the Talmud!" that of the other, "Condemnation and conflagration of both!" The Reuchlinians involuntarily became advocates of the Jews, searching for arguments to defend them; while the adherents of the Dominicans were only the more exasperated against the Jews, rummaging for old, antiquated books to find some proof of the malice of the Jews. All friends of Reuchlin were, of course, stigmatized by their opponents as "Talmudists" and "Judaizers."

The quarrel was daily assuming greater proportions. Hitherto it had been restricted to Germany. But now it began to attract attention in two remote localities—in Rome and in Paris. Hoogstraten and the Dominicans labored with all possible energy to have the sentence of the bishop of Spire reversed in both these places—by the most celebrated university in the one, and the papal government in the other—and cause Reuchlin's work to be condemned to the flames. In both cities they had their powerful and influential allies who were zealously devoted to their partizan cause. They counted most upon the services of a fanatical Cardinal in Rome, Bernardinus de Santa Croce, who was perhaps more conscientious, but none the less passionate in his hostility to all science and philosophy. To him they applied forthwith, making him believe that the Ocular Mirror was not purchased or circulated by any Christians, but only by Jews, and strongly urging him to defend their cause before the Papal chair. Reuchlin consequently, though according to the sentence of the apostolic court in Spire he had legitimately won his suit, was necessitated on his part, also, to take steps in order to prevent the appeal of Hoogstraten from having any effect through the intrigues of his enemies. He applied to his friends in Rome—to Questberg, the Papal Secretary of State; Cardi-

nal Adrian, who was in favor of enlightenment; Von Gurk, the Austrian Cardinal Plenipotentiary; Egidio de Viterbo, the Commander of the Augustine Order; Welser, the Provost of Ratisbon, and others, soliciting their influence with the Pope in his behalf. Previous to this he had, at the instance of his friends, published a collection of letters, which he had received from distinguished persons in Germany and Italy, and those he had sent to them in response, that the Pope and other dignitaries of Rome might, from his wide-spread connections, and from his elegant Latin style (which was of itself considered a recommendation in Italy), discover with what class of men the Dominican crew had to deal. This collection, published under the title, "*Letters of Illustrious Men*," (*Epistolæ illustrium sive clarorum virorum*, 1514,) contained not merely Latin, but even Greek and Hebrew letters, the latter (the Hebrew) being from Reuchlin to his teacher, the Jewish physician of the Emperor, and from Rabbi Margoles to Reuchlin. It contained, besides, the document of Emperor Frederic, in which the latter had conferred great honors and dignities on Reuchlin; also a paper, from which it was to appear how beloved Reuchlin had been at the house of Lorenzo de Medici, the father of the Pope, Leo X!

SECTION XVII.

REUCHLIN'S principal object was to prevent his assailants—Dominicans or followers of Thomas Aquinas—from constituting the committee to examine into the character of his work; and in this he succeeded, through the influence of his friends at the Papal Court. Leo X appointed the cardinal and patriarch, Dominicio Grimani, Judge of the investigating Committee/ This ecclesiastical dignity, it was well known, studied the Rabbinical literature and the Cabala, hated the Dominicans, (he himself being a patron of the Franciscan Order), and consequently had taken Reuchlin's part. Distinguished Jews in Rome, no doubt, were likewise exerting their influence in behalf of Reuchlin; but, like the Jews of Germany, they prudently remained in the back-ground, lest their forwardness in public give the question at issue the semblance of a cause in which they alone were concerned. Cardinal Grimani, therefore, issued a summons to both parties (June, 1514,)—Hoogstraten and Reuchlin—commanding them to appear in person, but permitting the latter, on account of his advanced age, to send a deputy. The grand inquisitor of the Dominicans, supplied with recommendations and well-filled purses, appeared in Rome, most sanguine of success. For, could not most any thing be obtained in Rome for money? The following lines of Hutten, characterizing the chair of St. Peter at that time, give a striking illustration of its mercenary character:

"Up, ye men! rise and live on booty and plunder;
Strike, slay the innocent, rob the sacred treasures;

Indulge your lusts, and all manner of crime commit
Yea, despise all law, and your God in heaven deny!
If ye bring gold to Rome, then ye are most upright
There virtue and salvation are bought and sold.
Yea, Indulgence even for future crime is for sale in Rome.
Therefore, if ye are mad, be good; if ye are wise, be wicked."

Reuchlin could offer nothing of the kind; he was poor. He had not the magic wand to command the treasures of bigoted women, nor the charms of confessors to exact the funds of wealthy penitents. Nor did public spirit then prevail to such a degree, as would stimulate men to contribute the means requisite to defray the costs of a trial in which the cause of their friend was at stake. Reuchlin had to be prepared to bear all the expense himself. However, his friends and well-wishers amply provided him with letters of recommendation. The Emperor himself, who was the cause of all these troubles, he having lent too willing an ear to the base calumnies of Pfefferkorn and the hysteric demands of his pious sister, often appealed to the Pope in Reuchlin's behalf, regretting his imprudent conduct in the past. "He begins to perceive, the Emperor wrote, that the Dominicans of Cologne are endeavoring, contrary to law and by all kinds of intrigues, to protract the controversy, in order to ruin the innocent, excellent, learned and orthodox Reuchlin. What he (Reuchlin) had written in favor of the Jewish literature, had been done at his (the Emperor's) request, for a good and noble purpose, and for the benefit of Christianity." The affluent Minister of the Emperor, Cardinal von Gurk, also interceded in Reuchlin's behalf. Certain Princes also, his Lord the Duke of Wurtemberg, Frederic the Wise, Elector of Saxony—the same who some years afterward figured so conspicuously in the part he took in behalf of Luther and the Reformation, and against the Dominicans—the Grand Master of the Knighthood of Germany, the Bishops of Strasburg, Constance, Worms and Spire, besides fifteen abbots and fifty-three Swabian cities. From this the Pope could infer the strength of public opinion against the Dominicans. The lawsuit, in fact, at first appeared to turn out favorably for Reuchlin, in spite of Hoogstraten's lavish expenditures and supercilious demeanor. His efforts, and those of his compeers, to have the Cardinal Bernardino de Santa Croce appointed second Judge of the Investigating Committee, were frustrated by the counter movements of the partisans of Reuchlin; the Pope being persuaded to appoint as such another patron of Reuchlin, the Cardinal Pietro Anconitani de St. Eusebio. These two Commissaries issued a mandate, prohibiting all other judges or tribunals from meddling with the case, or giving a decision, until the sentence was pronounced in Rome.

But the Dominicans bid defiance to public opinion, the Apostolic Commission, and the Pope himself. Cardinal Grimani they denounced and defamed as a blockhead. Of the Pope they spoke as of a schoolboy subject to their scholastic rod. They threat-

ened, in case the decision should be against them, they would throw off all allegiance to him, and have no scruples even in creating a schism in the Church. They even threatened, if Reuchlin should be successful, to conspire against the Pope with the Hussites in Bohemia. So prejudiced and blinded were they by their thirst for revenge, that they suffered their stubbornness of opinion to undermine Catholicism. They did not even spare the majesty of the Emperor; on learning that Maximilian had used his influence with the Pope in behalf of Reuchlin, they reviled him also.

The Dominicans built their hopes on the decision to be given by the University of Paris, the mother of all the high schools of Europe. If the theological faculty of this most distinguished Institution of learning were to condemn Reuchlin's work and the Talmud, the Pope himself would not venture to act contrary to the same. They, therefore, strained every nerve to obtain a favorable opinion from Paris. The King of France, in particular, Louis XII, was urged, through his Confessor, Guillaume Haquinet Petit, to bring his influence to bear upon the theological faculty in behalf of the Dominicans. The political affairs which had set the French and German governments at variance, were likewise made to contribute their influence. Because the Emperor of Germany was for Reuchlin, the King of France declared himself in favor of the Dominicans and against the Talmud. The present instance, by the way, serves to illustrate the want of respect manifested even by the orthodox of the time toward the authority of the Pope. The Papal Commission having publicly prohibited any and every tribunal from meddling with the case, it was not lawful for the theological faculty of Paris to express any opinion at all on the subject. Nevertheless, they entered independently upon an examination of the question, Whether or not Reuchlin's book in favor of the Jews and the Talmud contained any heresies. But it was no easy task to come to a definite decision, there being many warm friends of Reuchlin in Paris also, particularly the royal physician Cope and the Greek humanist, Jacob Lefebvre d'Étaple, of whom the latter was a distinguished member of the University. The deliberations, therefore, were considerably protracted (from May till the early part of August, 1514.) There were forty-seven meetings on the subject. There were some who either expressed themselves in favor of Reuchlin, or called attention to the illegality of their proceedings. But these were so far outnumbered by the fanatics, that they could hardly obtain the floor. Many of the French theologians based their opinion upon the example of Louis the Saint, who, at the urgent importunities of the baptized Jew, Nicholas Donia, and at the request of Pope Gregory IX, had caused the Talmud to be burned three centuries before. And so the theological faculty of Paris pronounced the following decision:

Reuchlin's Ocular Mirror, which contains heresies and zealously defends the Talmud, deserves to be condemned to the flames and the author thereof compelled to recant. They did not hesitate to add that this condemnation was brought about at the urgent request of the King. The latter is also said to have written to the Pope, to deal rigorously with the Ocular Mirror.

The Dominicans, particularly those of Cologne, exulted exceedingly on hearing this decision. They now felt sure of success, fondly believing that they could even compel the Pope to submit to their demands. They were not slow in making public this, their hard-won victory. One of the Dominicans, Wigand Wirth, published, under Pfefferkorn's name, a scurrilous pamphlet, entitled "*Sturm-glocke*," ("Alarm-bell,") September, 1514, in which, with great parade and exultation, the public is informed that the "Ocular Mirror" of that "old sinner, John Reuchlin, the defender of the faithless Jews," was justly consigned to the flames at Cologne, with the sanction of the "venerable University of Paris." But this publication was in violation of the imperial decree, which had imposed silence on both parties. Pfefferkorn, therefore, in whose name this libel was published, was called to an account by the imperial Attorney-General. The Dominicans of Cologne, of course, were doubly displeased—displeased because they who believed in having the privilege of talking boldly and independently, whenever they chose, were prohibited deriding and reviling, and because Pfefferkorn was to be punished for some one else. The Emperor's sister, Kunigunde, as appears from a subsequent pamphlet of Pfefferkorn, was again called to their aid. She gave Pfefferkorn again a letter of recommendation to the Emperor. Supported by this bigoted Princess, the Dominicans persisted still more in paying no regard to the imperial decree, and published—December 5, 1514—all existing documents in their favor, the opinions of the four Universities which had condemned the Ocular Mirror.

But again an incident happened which proved unfortunate to the Dominicans, in that it branded their abettor Pfefferkorn in the estimation of the public. A baptized Jew named Pfaff Rapp, or Pfefferkorn, as he was likewise called by others, having been accused of sacrilege in Halle, had been condemned to death and lacerated with red-hot prongs, but a few days previous to the condemnation of the Ocular Mirror in Paris. Ulrich von Hutten, who appears to have been one of the judges in the case, and other friends of Reuchlin, hastened to avail themselves of this occurrence for the purpose of casting odium upon the Dominicans and their pet, John Pfefferkorn, the originator of the entire quarrel. Hutten described in Latin verse the crimes of this baptized malefactor of Halle, intentionally exaggerating them. He also manifested, on this occasion, his uncharitable feeling toward the Jews, insinuating that

Judea only, and not Germania, could have produced such a monster. He cautions his cotemporaries against receiving any Jews at the baptismal font; since Christians can be on their guard against them only when separated from them. Others described this incident in Latin and German prose, likewise exaggerating the crimes of that rascal, charging him with performing the functions of a priest—though not ordained as such—and at the same time holding secret intercourse with the Jews; with having desecrated ever so many sacred wafers, slaughtered many Christian children, and killed many adult Christians by medical treatment; nay, more, with having intended to poison entire districts, and been on the point of putting an end to the life of Archbishop Albert of Magdeburg (by whose order he had been sentenced to death) and his brother Joachin, Elector of Brandenburg. All these charges, of course, were sheer fabrications, intended solely to bring disgrace upon Pfefferkorn and his confederates, the presumption being that he himself might be capable of such crimes. By these libels against the Pfefferkorn of Halle, the public was to be put on their guard against the Pfefferkorn of Cologne, cautioning them not to put any confidence in the latter, his object being to swindle the Christians, while in secret he held intercourse with the Jews.

While Reuchlin's friends were thus making capital of the execution of Pfefferkorn in Halle, the case of Hoogstraten vs. Reuchlin was dragging its slow length along in Rome, protracted by the intrigues and bribes of the Dominicans. Reuchlin even found it difficult to find an advocate, the jurists of the day being afraid to grapple with the malignant friars of the Dominican Order. In sending a copy of the proceedings relative to the case before the tribunals of Mayence and Spire, he had promised to add a copy of the chartered rights and privileges of the Jews, in order to confirm his statement, and prove that it was not he alone that spoke in behalf of the Jews. But what proofs he, after considerable researches, was able to find, were far from substantiating the proposition which he, in a generous mood, had laid down—to-wit, that the Jews were, from times immemorial, fellow-citizens of the German Empire. He could only produce some faded parchments, showing that they had received certain privileges from the Pope, protecting them in the practice of their religion and the study of their sacred works. Still another act of the Dominicans was intended to procrastinate the decision of the case. Hoogstraten had the "Ocular Mirror" translated, falsifying the original in many places, and putting heretical sentiments into the mouth of the author. This translation accompanied his bill of indictment. The Papal Commission, to be sure, caused another translation to be made, of a more literal and faithful character, by a German, Martin von Groningen, who was then in Rome. But with this translation the op-

posite party, again, found fault. Through these and similar obstacles, the trial made but little progress. Already it had cost Reuchlin over 400 gold-florins, and there was no telling how much more it would cost. Reuchlin's means were nearly exhausted. But this was the very thing on which the Dominicans counted; their object being to impoverish their opponent so that he might not be able to prosecute his case. The prospect of Reuchlin's triumph in Rome was daily becoming more and more gloomy. Reuchlin's friends therefore took care to find another tribunal for his cause—to appeal from the ill-advised or intimidated Pope to public opinion.

SECTION XVIII.

During this suspense, while all classes, both high and low, clergymen of all grades, princes and enlightened citizens, were eagerly waiting for information relative to the Reuchlinian trial in Rome, one of the younger humanists composed a series of letters, which in wit, humor and pungent satire have never been equaled in the progress of literature. These "Letters of the Unenlightened"—*Epistolæ Obscurorum Virorum*—as they were called, were published in the course of the year 1515, most of them being addressed to that base rascal Ortuin Gratius, and written in the style of the illiterate monks. In them the author exposes the meanness, haughtiness, the amazing ignorance, lewdness and obscenity of the Dominicans—their miserable Latin, their still more miserable morality, their sophistical reasoning, their repulsive twaddle—in short, all their vicious habits and intolerable ways and manners; and that, in so clear and palpable a light, that even the unlettered could understand. All the enemies of Reuchlin—Hoogstraten, Arnold de Tongern, Ortuin Gratius, Pfefferkorn and all their understrappers, Peter Mayer, Wigand, the University of Paris—all were therein doomed to run the gauntlet. They were chastised with stings and scorpions, leaving no spot unhurt. These ingenious satires, full of sarcasm superior to that of Aristophanes, spoke with the more telling effect, since they represented the Dominicans, the Thomists and the doctors of theology, speaking in their own person, showing their own, offensive nakedness, and exposing themselves of their own accord, as it were, to the public pillory of disgrace. But this derision of the "Unenlightened" could not stop short of exposing the moral defects of popery, of the entire hierarchical tyranny and the Church in general; the Dominicans themselves, with all their arrogance and ignorance, their lasciviousness and impudence, being but one of the mischievous results and natural effects of the Catholic regime. Thus, the satirical "Letters of the Unenlightened" operated as a corrosive acid, utterly destroying the already foul carcass of the Catholic Church.

The Jews and the Talmud having been

the first to give rise to the Reuchlinian troubles, were, of course, not wanting in these Letters. In this way the much despised race of the Hebrews became the subject of public discussion. In the second letter John Pellifex, A. M., is represented putting a question of conscience to the so-called spiritual father Ortuin. In visiting the fair at Frankfort, he, in company with a young theologian, passed by two respectable-looking men dressed in black gowns and monk's hoods; and, thinking they were of the clerical profession, he bowed to them and took his cap off in token of respect. But, to his amazement, his companion informed him that they were only Jews, at the same time declaring that he had committed a capital sin, it being idolatrous and contrary to the first of the Ten Commandments to bow to a Jew. For, if a Christian pays any respect to a Jew, he acts contrary to the principles of Christianity, and gives himself the semblance of a Jew; which might lead the Jews to boast that they are better than the Christians, and become the more obdurate in their unbelief and contempt of the Christian religion. [This mode of drawing inferences, the reader will observe, was analogous to that pursued by the Dominicans against Reuchlin for speaking in behalf of the Jews.] The young theologian then relates that he once bent the knee before a picture in a certain church, thinking it was the image of St. Peter, but, upon drawing nearer, was astonished to find that it was the likeness of a Jew. Stung with remorse of conscience, he went to a Dominican confessor, who explained to him the awful character of the sin he had, though unintentionally, committed; adding that, but for his being at that time accidentally vested with *episcopal* authority, he could not have absolved him from his mortal sin; and that if the same had been committed intentionally, the Pope alone would have had power to cancel such a sin. And so the young theologian advises Pellifex to confess his making courtesy to the two Jews before the Official, as he had neglected to look more closely, in which case he would have observed the yellow circle on their dress distinguishing the Jews from the clergy. Taking this advice, Pellifex asks Ortuin the very grave and important question, "Whether he had committed a pardonable or unpardonable sin, whether his case be a simple one, or whether it must be brought before a bishop, or even the Pope." He also desires Ortuin to write to him, whether the citizens of Frankfort were right in suffering the Jews to go about in the same dress as the doctors of sacred theology. The Emperor ought not to tolerate such Jews—those dogs, enemies of Christ, &c. [This, too, was in the style of the Dominicans.] Surely nothing was more adapted to ridicule the miserable, hair-splitting logic of the scholastic theologians of the time, than the alleged incidents described in this letter.

In another letter a disciple of Ortuin,

Smearugly, with a heart full of sorrow comes complaining to his master that the people of Mayence are by no means as pious as those of Cologne; that one of the citizens of Mayence had even dared to maintain that the holy coat at Triers never belonged to Christ, but was an old ragged garment—that the hair of the blessed Virgin is no more in existence, and that he despises the indulgences of the Dominicans, the latter being swindlers, defrauding alike women and peasants. "Which I hearing, cried: 'Into the fire—into the fire with this heretic!—If only Hoogstraten were to hear this—the Grand Inquisitor!' But he (the citizen of Mayence) laughed, saying: 'Hoogstraten is an abominable creature, but Reuchlin is a man of honor, while the theologians are devils. The University of Paris, which condemned Reuchlin's book, was bribed by the Dominicans; she is not the mother of all other High Schools, but the mother of stupidity.' The Talmud, he also maintained, was never condemned by the Church."

In the same trifling style the letter continues to ridicule the Dominicans. A professor of theology cautions Ortuin against setting a bad example by unbecoming intercourse with women; but his writing against Reuchlin was taken as an equivalent for this sin. Pfefferkorn, it is said, whom Ortuin defends, is a good-for-nothing fellow, who joined the Church not from love of the Christian faith, but because the Jews wanted to hang him for his crimes, he being a scoundrel and an informer. They also say that Pfefferkorn, like his namesake who was burned at the stake in Halle, is a bad Christian, and will one day become a renegade. Ortuin is, therefore, warned to be on his guard against him.

Another, Simpletonius de Pepenek, tells Ortuin that he had recently disputed with two Jews in Worms on the belief in a Messiah, showing them the delusion under which they labored, and referring them for proof to Pfefferkorn; to which the Jews laughing replied: "Your Pfefferkorn in Cologne is a base swindler. He knows nothing of Hebrew, and has turned Christian only to hide his wickedness. When yet a Jew in his native country, Moravia, he struck a woman on her face, that she might not see him stealing 200 florins from the desk where she was sitting, and ran off. In one place the gallows was already erected for him on account of a theft he had committed; but by some means or other he was liberated. We have seen the gallows, and so have some Christians and noblemen, whom we can mention by name. Hence you must not refer to the thief as evidence." To which Simpletonius replies: "You wicked Jews tell nothing but falsehoods, and, if you did not possess certain rights and privileges, I would drag you by the hair in the mud. Pfefferkorn is a good Christian, for he and his wife often go to the Dominicans to make confession. . . . Do you think that the burgomaster and theologians of Cologne are such dunces, as

that they would appoint him superintendent of the hospital and surveyor of salts, if he were not worthy and competent. You say that Pfefferkorn is a favorite of the theologians and the burgomaster on account of his pretty wife. But that is not true. For the burgomasters have pretty wives of their own, and the theologians do not care about women."

In another of these Letters, Ortuin Gratius is gravely asked, "What would be the form of the body of a baptized Jew at the Resurrection?" which question is considered in a subtle, obscenely written theological dissertation, worthy of the scholasticism of the Dominicans.

All western Europe was convulsed with laughter on reading these "Letters of the Unenlightened." In Germany, Italy, France and England, all who understood Latin laughed or tittered at the style and contents of these self-confessions of the Dominicans and Scholastics. The rude vulgarities, the thick-skulled ignorance, the over-wise, concealed folly, the unchaste expressions and sentiments—all these ridiculous things and sayings put into the mouth of the Dominicans themselves, presented a strange contrast to the external dignity and superficial learning of the Order, and excited the risibles even of the most serious. It is related that Erasmus was so convulsed with laughter on reading these Letters, that he got rid of a painful swelling of the throat from which he was suffering at the time. The ludicrous comedy played by the simpletons only united the laughing public on the side of Reuchlin; and, whatever might now be the sentence of the papal chair, public opinion had pronounced judgment upon the Dominicans. Many were the guesses as to who was the author of these Letters. Some thought it was Reuchlin himself, or Erasmus, or Hutten, or some one or other of the Humanists. To the many queries as to the author, Hutten jocosely replied, "It was God Himself." In fact, it was daily becoming more and more manifest that the controversy in regard to the burning of the Talmud, begun in so trifling and insignificant a manner, had assumed a world-wide significance, in which the will of the few was, in a measure, absorbed in, and made subservient to, the will of the community at large. In Rome, and in Cologne, the more sagacious and penetrating Reuchlinians beheld in this controversy the work of Providence.

The first edition of these Letters had been sold so rapidly, that shortly afterward a second edition appeared, containing new, additional letters of the same sort. In one of these Hoogstraten is represented indulging in the following complaint: "I wished I had never commenced this affair. They are all laughing at and teasing me. Here (in Rome) Reuchlin has a greater reputation than in Germany. He is a favorite of many cardinals, prelates, and papal officials. . . . If I were only at home in Cologne! In my absence, methinks, things are taking an unfavorable turn in Ger-

many. They are all writing books on theology *ad libitum*." This flat and fidgety tone runs through the whole letter. This furnished fresh material for laughter. The benighted Dominicans were so stupid, that at first they thought these Letters were written in their favor. But when, from the loud merriment of their opponents, they perceived that the object of these Letters was to hold them up to public ridicule and scorn, they were full of violent rage. But their ravings were impotent, as they were not prepared for that sort of attack. Pfefferkorn and his prompters endeavored to weaken the effect produced by these Letters, by issuing another pamphlet in German and Latin, with the title, "Defense against the notorious *Epistolæ Obscurorum Virorum*." But this only served to pour oil into the fire, and increase still more the inclination to laugh on the part of the Reuchlinians.

The German Jews alone could not join in the general laugh. What profited it them, if a few enlightened Christians manifested a peculiar partiality toward Judaism? The Christian community at large were once for all prejudiced against the Jewish faith and its votaries. Erasmus well remarks at the time: "If it be Christian to hate the Jews, then are we very Christian." Their enemies, therefore, found it no difficult task to injure them. And so the Dominicans meanwhile strove to attain their object by wreaking vengeance upon the Jews. Pfefferkorn had repeatedly called attention to the fact that there were but three large Jewish Congregations in Germany—at Ratisbon, Frankfort and Worms—which being destroyed, the whole Jewish race would be extirpated from Germany.

In order to effect the expulsion of the Jews from Frankfort and Worms, their enemies hit upon the following expedient: The Archbishop of Mayence, at the instance of some ecclesiastics who were befriended with Hoogstraten, issued a call to all clerical and temporal lords of German cities to convene at Frankfort, for the purpose of considering the propriety of expelling the Jews from Germany, and never again readmitting them. In obedience to this call, deputies of several cities and episcopal dioceses assembled in Frankfort on the 7th of January, 1516. According to the programme laid before the assembly, they were all to unite, and obligate themselves to renounce all rights and benefits they derived from the Jews, to expel their Jewish subjects from their several domains, and never again, under any title whatsoever, admit them either for permanent or temporary residence. Having passed this resolution, they were to submit the same to the Emperor and solicit his approval. In their deliberations over the weal or woe of the Jews of Western Germany, the representatives of the Palatinate, Hessa, and several cities, voted for their expulsion. The cities of Frankfort, Worms, and a few more, gave their consent only conditionally, namely, provided there was perfect unanimity on

the question. The deputies of Fulda alone, the Count of Wertheim, and a few more votes, were against expulsion, though only from selfish motives. The delegation from Fulda maintained that the expulsion of the Jews would prove detrimental to them, since those expelled would be received in Lower Hesse, Henneberg and Thuringen, and then they (the subjects of Fulda) would suffer more grievances than if the Jews were allowed to remain. Besides, they had but recently granted the Jews protection for several years to come, and were therefore not disposed to act contrary to their promise. Michael, the Count of Wertheim, expressed himself in a similar strain. The Jews, he thought, if expelled from his domain, would find a domicile in Wurzburg, Rosenberg and other places, where many Jews were already living, which would prove injurious to his own subjects. Not one voice was heard asserting the rights of humanity or expressing sympathy for the Jews who were thus to be cast into misery; such was the obdurate and brutalized state of the human heart under the culture of the orthodox Church of the times. However, as is usually the case in German conventions, the meeting at Frankfort only resolved to adjourn to a future day (March 8) for the purpose of coming to a definite conclusion.

The Jews of that region beheld with terror the swiftly-approaching danger; for, though the German lords and princes were generally dilatory and discordant, yet in the persecution of the Jews they were always energetic and unanimous. The Jews, therefore, had no alternative but to send a deputation to the Emperor, praying his gracious majesty to protect them from the evil designs of their respective superiors, both temporal and ecclesiastical. The Emperor fortunately remembered that the Jews, though subject to various greater and lesser lords, were strictly speaking his own imperial property, and that their expulsion from the Empire would consequently be an infringement upon his sovereign rights. Maximilian accordingly hastened to address a letter to the Archbishop and Chapter of Mayence, to all secular and spiritual authorities, as also to the several municipal magistrates, strongly condemning their deliberations, and prohibiting their assembling again on the day appointed. And so the proposed convention did not take place. The Jews of the respective districts were, for the time being, delivered from all danger. But the Archbishop of Mayence, or, in his absence, the Chapter, did not give up agitating the subject. Steps were to be taken to influence the Emperor to give his consent, at last, to the measure of expulsion, his mandate having been issued "at the urgent, untruthful and unfounded importunities of the Jews." The enemies of the Jews, the friends of the Dominicans of Cologne, were still sanguine in the hope of influencing the Emperor against the Jews. But their hopes were disappointed. The Jews were

not banished for the present. The Archbishop of Mayence, prompted not so much by benevolent as selfish motives, even permitted newly immigrated Jews to settle in his diocese, granting them the customary privileges—to lend money on interest, but to be subject to his jurisdiction; all of which, however, was granted only for a certain period and for an annual tax of twelve florins for every Jewish soul. But there was one clause in the Charter of privileges showing the illiberality of the ecclesiastical dignitary, namely: relatives of his Jewish subjects, not residing in his diocese, when coming see their friends in his diocese, were not permitted to stay more than two nights on pain of a pecuniary fine. It was only after many a revolution that this hardened generation, with a heart of stone, could be made susceptible of the voice of humanity and sympathy!

SECTION XIX.

The very controversy of Reuchlin with the Dominicans in regard to the Talmud was the beginning of a thorough and effectual revolution, destined to reform a petrified and demoralized world. The plots and counterplots of the two parties, the obstacles which they continually threw in the way, caused the trial to make but slow, yet some perceptible progress. Hoogstraten, seeing that the commission consisting of the two Cardinals Grimani and Aconitani would decide in favor of Reuchlin, persisted in demanding an apostolic Council to decide the case, maintaining that the subject in dispute was not a matter of law but one of faith. Pope Leo, wishing to keep on good terms with both parties, was obliged, contrary to his own repeated mandates, to comply in part with this demand. For, on the one hand the Emperor Maximilian and many German princes insisted upon Reuchlin's acquittal, in order to compel the Dominicans for ever to hold their peace; on the other, the king of France and the youthful Charles—the duke of Burgundy—the future emperor of Germany and king of Spain and America clamorously demanded, that the people should have the case prosecuted with more energy and cause the pro-Jewish book of Reuchlin to be at last condemned. Leo thought proper to rid himself of the already irksome and serious affair. He referred the same, therefore, to a committee of investigation, consisting of the members of the Lateran Council there in session. Thus the question relative to the Talmud was made the important subject to be considered by an ecumenic synod, becoming in some measure a European question, open everywhere to public discussion.

Reuchlin, who was at first full of hopes that his cause would be speedily decided in Rome, seeing that two years had elapsed before any final decision was arrived at, gave himself up to pusillanimous despair. He was afraid that the zeal of his friends would become cold and his own means

exhausted in prosecuting the case. Being already far advanced in age, he feared lest he sink under the burden of years, and be, after all, officially stigmatized by the Catholic world as a heretic, when he shall be no more. His friends had to inspire him repeatedly with courage. No one did this more emphatically than the fiery, youthful Ulrich Hutten who was then sojourning in Italy. He was the only one who fully appreciated the entire bearing of this world-renowned trial. It was his ardent wish, that the Reuchlinian controversy would take such a course, as would bring about the downfall of the Dominican Order and the papal government, and give the death-blow to the dark apparitions of the middle ages.

At last, on the second of July 1516, the decision was pronounced. The first vote given in the synodic commission, that of bishop Georgius Benignus, was to this effect: that Reuchlin's "Ocular Mirror" contains no heresy, and that the opinion of the university of Paris and other institutions of learning to the contrary is to be condemned as contumelious. The second vote, that of the bishop of Malin, was of the same character, with this addition: that Hoogstraten, the inquisitor, who considers himself a pillar of the Church, ought to be punished for his contumacy. The votes of all the members of the commission were similar in tone, with the exception of that of the bigoted, fanatical Cardinal Sylvester Prierias. He was a Dominican, and, of course, a great admirer of auto-da-fes. He was the only one who spoke in favor of Hoogstraten. The latter was very much surprised at the sentence of condemnation. But he was not discouraged. He still endeavored to effect some flank movements and evade the decision, going so far even as to openly post his anathematizing declaration against Reuchlin, the Talmud and the Jews, in several public places in Rome. But these placards were torn down, and stamped in the mud, by the partizans of Reuchlin, whose number was continually increasing in proportion as Hoogstraten's purse was becoming exhausted. However, being well acquainted with the most prominent officials of the papal government, and possessing a mind exceedingly quick in contrivances for evil, Hoogstraten did not give up his cause as lost. The Dominican inquisitor and his friends, therefore, induced Leo X. to issue a mandate, commanding for the present a stay of proceedings (*mandatum de supersedendo*.)

This evasion was in exact conformity with the character of Leo, and was well suited to his position between the two passionately excited parties. He hated the current of agitation that would have overwhelmed him, had he definitely decided in favor of the one or the other party. He would fain have obliged both the humanists and the benighted, both the emperor of Germany and the king of France; and so the proceedings were pending, and could at any moment, whenever a more favorable

opportunity presented itself, be resumed by the Dominicans. Hoogstraten himself was, indeed, obliged to leave Rome in shame and disgrace; still he did not give up the hope of attaining his object at last. He was a man of firm and resolute determination, and would not succumb under any humiliations; but he was also so levoid of principle, that he had no scruples in resorting to falsehoods and prevarications.

Leo X. must have over-estimated the influence of papacy and failed to recognize the real character of the conflict between the two parties, or he would not have cherished the mistaken idea that his mandate would be able to suppress all further agitation. The public mind was too much excited, to be quieted by orders from high authorities. Neither of the two parties desired peace, but war—war to the bitter end.—At the time Hoogstraten returned from Rome, his very life was in danger. Enraged Reuchlinians often plotted against him; and it was due to the emphatic warnings of Reuchlin alone, that the odious inquisitor suffered no more serious harm than that Hutten, some time afterward, struck him contemptuously with the reversed edge of the sword. The two parties continued to increase the agitation still more. The Dominican party, being partly abandoned by the papal government and stigmatized in the estimation of the public, endeavored to attain their end by defiant strength. The German preachers, most of whom had gone forth from the Dominican Order were instructed to thunder from the pulpit against Reuchlin and his adherents, and preachers of such hue as Peter Meyer were but too glad to act in obedience to such instructions. By publishing pamphlets with comillustrations, bedaubing the Reuchlinians, they sought to ingratiate themselves with the populace. They gnashed their teeth, of course, mostly against the "Epistolæ Obscurorum Virorum," which so thoroughly exposed them and their cause to the public pillory of disgrace. They would fain have banished them from the world. They did, in fact, use their utmost exertions to effect this, and spent much treasure to induce the pope to issue a bull interdicting their circulation. Leo X. acted with little sagacity in issuing the bull, particularly in the manner in which he promulgated the interdict. The reason given for the interdict was, because those "Letters" contained so much contumely and mockery against the professors of theology in Cologne and the university of Paris, and because they were so full of virulent poison. All preachers were furthermore enjoined to read the papal bull to the people in their vernacular and explain it to them. The preachers, of course, were not dilatory in obeying these instructions; but neither they nor the bull of the pope had any material influence. A new spirit had, within a short time, risen over the European world,—a spirit, that could no more be exorcised by thunders of the Vatican. Besides, it was the more dif-

ficult to suppress those letters from the very fact that they only attacked the Dominican Order. For, the members of other Orders, jealous of the Dominicans, delighted in their perusal, and derived a joyous satisfaction from their publication.

Nor were the Humanists or Reuchlinians wanting in their zeal to keep up the differences and contentions. They cheered each other on by letters, and strove to prejudice and exasperate public opinion against the Dominicans by publishing legal documents—such as the decision of Bishop Benignus against Hoogstraten—and various polemical pamphlets. Hutten, having had occasion to scrutinize the doings of the clergy in Rome, was most zealous in his efforts to bring about the fall of clerical dominion in Germany. While censuring Reuchlin for not showing sufficient daring, he remarks in his terse, cutting style: "A great share of your burden we take upon ourselves. I am now engaged in fanning a flame which will in due time rise on high? I am getting recruits, whose age and social position will qualify them for the mode of warfare. Shall I forsake the cause of truth? Ah, you know not Hutten sufficiently! No, if you were to forsake it to-day, I would take it up myself, and, with my comrades, contend for it with all the means in my power." And, indeed, Hutten kept his word. For, from the day that Reuchlin, weakened with age, was satisfied with merely indulging in complaints, Hutten fought in the foremost rank, speaking in language most fiery and pungent.

SECTION XX.

The second part of the "*Epistolæ Obscuro-rum Virorum*," mostly composed by Hutten, appeared in the summer 1517, and only served to increase the laughter of the Reuchlinians and the grin of their opponents. A professor is represented complaining before Ortuin Gratius, that it was his misfortune of late to hear most blasphemous remarks from a Franciscan, who was a warm friend of Reuchlin; saying, among other things: "If the Dominicans of Cologne have a just cause to maintain, why do they engage that baptized Jew to defend it? But they would associate with men even more wicked than he (Pfefferkorn), since birds of a feather flock together." To which the professor rejoined, saying, that Pfefferkorn was an honest man, and of noble descent, though he is too modest to boast of it. Whereupon the Franciscan replies: "I have never heard anything of Pfefferkorn's honesty. All I have heard is, that if the Jews had not convicted him of capital crimes, he would never have become a Christian. A Jew is reported to have said in reference to his conversion: 'What is considered worthless among the Jews is good enough anyhow for Christians.' The professor continuing to take Pfefferkorn's part, his Franciscan opponent closes with the remark; "Pfefferkorn is worthy of having such a defender!"

Another of these letters spoke of the infallibility of the pope, which had suffered considerably in the Reuchlinian controversy, in such a jolly, facetious style, that one could then easily imagine the speedy fall of popery. The pope is said "to have acquitted Reuchlin; but he may condemn him again. The pope is not subject to the law; he is himself the living law on earth. Therefore he may do any and every thing, without respect to any body. And even if he have once said, 'No,' he may anyhow say 'Yes' again."

Another of these letters purports coming from a Dominican monk, in which Ortuin is informed of what the people say about the controversy. "They say, among other things, that Pfefferkorn, who had furnished the entire scurrilous story, was no better than the one who was put to death in Halle with red-hot prongs; that he has committed ever so many crimes, and that it was he who instigated the theologians of Cologne to burn the writings of the Jews, and that they have done so only for the purpose of inducing the Jews to redeem their books from the flames by offering large sums of money; since many a Jew would rather give a hundred or a thousand florins than be deprived of his Talmud. Now, Reuchlin came and frustrated this plan. Therefore, they are enraged against him, calling him a heretic." . . . Then follow attacks upon the character of Arnold de Tongern, who is reported to have been convicted of forgery; upon that of Ortuin who is said to have been caught in the act of committing adultery, and upon Wigand Wirth (the author of the "*Alarm-bell*,") who denied the immaculate conception of Mary and was afterwards compelled to recant. Upon which a simple-minded Dominican remarks: "You must not say such things before the people, even, though it be the truth; for this would bring the whole Dominican Order into disrepute, and set a bad example to the community." At the close the monk exclaims: "I wished, oh, Ortuin, the thing was at an end; for it proves very injurious to us, people wont give us any more alms. . . . They all tell us to go a begging to John Reuchlin."

Another letter affords much merriment at Pfefferkorn's expense, ridiculing his ungrammatical Latin, and excusing him on the ground that he writes like the theologians, who are not particular about the correctness of their style. Another letter reports that Pfefferkorn is on a missionary tour in Germany; which is rather uncomfortable to him, as he is compelled to leave his wife and children in Cologne. But the theologians of that city are very attentive to her, and afford her much consolation. The monks of the monastery, also, visit her occasionally, saying: "We pity you, that you are all alone." To which she replies; "You must come and see me—for I am almost a widow—and console me."

In another epistle, a Dominican writes to Ortuin, that he is not yet fully convinced whether Pfefferkorn would remain true to

his adopted religion; for, but recently a converted Jew, who was dean of a certain church, died, showing on his death-bed that a Jew can not change his nature—he having expressed the wish “to die as a good Jew.” Another convert is said to have put a stone into a pot of boiling water, repeatedly asking whether it has become soft. Upon receiving the answer, that a stone can not be boiled sort, he remarked: “Neither can a Jew turn a good Christian; they get baptized only for the sake of lucre or from fear, or in order to despise their own brethren-in-faith.”

These *Epistolæ*, the first series (by Grotus Rubianus), as well as the second (by Ulrich von Hutten), fully accomplished the purpose for which they were composed. The Dominicans had recourse to denials and falsehoods; they bedaubed Reuchlin and his adherents with their foul calumnies, and in their stale, insipid pamphlets, written both in bad prose and in still worse poetry, they imprecated fire and brimstone upon their opponents, uttering most vile curses in addition. But it was all in vain. Their reputation was gone. With their fictitious “Lamentations,” (published 1518) they only heightened the scathing sarcasm of their adversaries, exposing their own insipid taste, their stale wit and dogmatic stubbornness. In one of their Letters of Lamentations—No. 44—a would-be-witty Dominican writes as follows: “I hear the Jews rejoice at the successful progress of their cause. They read a certain book at home and in their devilish synagogues; they daily deride the Christians and retain their own blasphemous works. Hence, if the unprincipled enemies of the Cross maliciously rejoice, we must, if we would be saved, mourn. We have this honor—that the Jews, to the scandal of the Church, translate the *Epistolæ Obscurorum Virorum* into German.”

SECTION XXI.

The fact that the Church had experienced a violent shock could no longer be kept secret, but was proclaimed aloud from the house-tops. Not only her opponents, but the Provincial of the Dominican Order, *Eberhard von Cleve*, and the entire Chapter admitted in an official letter to the pope, that the Reuchlinian difficulty had brought shame and contempt upon the Dominican monks and friars, that they were decried—“undeservedly!”—as enemies of brotherly love, peace and harmony, that their sermons were derided, the confession-chairs shunned, that, in short, every thing which they undertook was ridiculed and construed into effusions of pride and arrogance. The disciples of Domingo, who owed their rapid growth and distinction to the increasing fanaticism against the Albigenses, and because they were at first more rigid in morals than secular and ordained clergymen, were then, in Germany at least, nearly played out, having sunk far beneath the latter in moral conduct.

In the meantime the controversy between Reuchlin and the Dominicans (and, in particular Hoogstraten) was carried to another field, touching the sphere of Judaism at another point. The *Cabbala*, strictly speaking, formed the back-ground of this new movement. From his enthusiastic love of this mystic science, which was supposed to furnish the key for the better understanding of philosophy and Christianity, Reuchlin wished to have the Talmud spared, believing, as he did, that it contained mystic elements. The young Cabbala thus became the patron of her aged predecessor, the Talmud. But as yet Reuchlin was but slightly acquainted with this quasi-science. Such, however, was his ardent thirst for knowledge, that he would not rest until he was more thoroughly initiated into its mysteries. He even considered it a point of honor to demonstrate the harmony of the Cabbala with Christianity, inasmuch as his orthodoxy, honesty and learning had been called in question by his adversaries. But he had the misfortune of pursuing his Hebrew studies with teachers of but moderate abilities. Jacob Loans and Obadiah Sforno, who instructed him in Hebrew grammar, were far from having mastered the subject. When Pfefferkorn published his calumnies against Jewish literature, Reuchlin, in order to refute the same and illustrate the excellencies of the poetical works of the Hebrews of the Middle Ages, could find no better illustration than that indifferent poem of Joseph Ezohi, called “The Silver Cup”—*קערת כסף*—and, so fascinated was he with this poetical production, that he translated it into Latin. What a pity that he did not become acquainted with the works of such poets as Gebirol and Judah Halevi, who flourished four or five centuries before; their compositions, so mellifluous, imaginative and rich in ideas, would surely have put him in ecstasies! He was similarly unfortunate in his study of the Cabbala. After a long and tedious search for a guide, he met by chance with the most obscure work on the subject, written by the eccentric Cabbalist Joseph Gicatilla of Castile, and then but recently translated into Latin by the convert Paul Ricio. This Ricio, a German by birth, originally professor in Pavia, then court-physician of the Emperor Maximilian, on leaving the pale of Judaism carried into the Christian community a moderate stock of Hebrew learning. He was not possessed of a strong, vigorous mind; his works, at least, do not betray any thing of the kind. When the controversy in regard to the utility or inutilty of the Talmud was in progress, he was requested by the Emperor to translate it into Latin; and though he occupied himself all his life with the work, he never published a single treatise complete. He made several extracts from different Talmudical and Rabbinical works, without giving the uninitiated the least idea of the character of the Talmud. His extracts were all made with an eye to his favorite

hobby—viz: to prove the Messiahship of Jesus.

Like Pico de Mirandola, this Paul Ricio fancied that the Cabbala teaches and substantiates the peculiar doctrines of Christianity. He too, therefore, set about translating some portions of a work of Joseph Gicatilla—"The Portals of Light" (קַטְרֵי אֹרֶךְ *Portæ Lucis*)—dedicating the same to the Emperor. As a general thing Jewish converts of that day made it their special business to glorify Christianity by passages quoted from Cabbalistical writings, fabricating the same in case they were not able to find such as they devised. They would write fictitious works in the style of the Agadah and the Zohar, presenting the dogmas of Christianity in a Jewish dress. Thus among others, that sublime passage of Isaiah—"Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Hosts"—was paraphrased by those forgers of falsehood after the manner of the Rabbinical Midrashim, so as to make it applicable to the Trinity—viz: "Holy is the Father, holy the Son, holy the Holy Ghost."

As soon as Reuchlin heard of Ricio's translation of the nonsensical work of Gicatilla, he rested not till he obtained a copy of the same—which he did in August 1516—regarding it as a rich gold-mine, from which he could draw ample treasures for the glorification of the Church, and educe sufficient proofs for his assertion that the Cabbala harmonizes with the dogmas of Christianity. His friends and admirers had more than once solicited him to slake their panting thirst for the waters flowing from mysterious, awe-inspiring depths. He vainly believed that by means of the puerilities of Gicatilla he could solve the problem of the world—a most singular conceit of a mind generally so rational and acute. Reuchlin firmly adhered to the opinion that the origin of the Cabbala was lost in remote periods of antiquity, and no proofs, however, convincing, could persuade him to recognize the fact of its comparatively recent birth. He as well as many of his contemporaries belonging to the class of Humanists, was perfectly satisfied that the Cabbalah strictly speaking was but the original wisdom of Pythagoras translated into Chaldee, or *vice versa*, that Pythagoras derived his philosophy from Judaism.

In consequence of this discovery of Reuchlin that the Cabbala contains the highest wisdom, revealing and confirming the mysteries of Christianity, he wrote a work entitled "The Science of the Cabbala"—*de Arte Cabalistica*—published in March 1517, and dedicated it to Pope Leo X.; hoping, by this public dedication, to add new strength to his argument, that the writings of the Jews, instead of being burned, deserved to be cherished. This book is written in the form of a dialogue—the favorite style of the age—between a Greek (*Philotrus*) and a Mohammedan (*Maranus*), and a Jew (*Simon*); the two former having called upon the latter in Frankfort, to be initiated by him into the mysteries of the Cabbala. Both of them indulge in fulsome flatteries

to the Jew, that is Judaism. They declare, that, since so many hundreds of thousands of Jews have been exiled from Spain and remnants of them scattered to the remotest regions of the earth, they have heard of his vast learning, his incredible erudition, philosophic clearness, and more especially of his thorough knowledge of the metaphysics of the Cabbala; so much so, that the eyes of all, from beyond Surmatia to the Polar Sea, were turned to him. Simon, unable to resist the amiable impertinence of the two philosophers, Philolaus and Maranus, explains to them the fundamental doctrines of the Cabbala, premising first of all that the Scriptures and the Agadah of the Talmud are not to be interpreted literally, but allegorically and symbolically.

The Jewish Cabbalist of Frankfort, or rather Reuchlin, then accumulates a vast heap of classical, ecclesiastical, talmudical and cabbalistical sentences and expositions of heathen mythology, Biblical verses and sayings of the Agadah—all this being designed to show that the cabbalistical puerilities of the half-deranged Abraham Abulafia and his pupil Joseph Gicatilla, by means of their transpositor of letters and combinations of numbers, were perfectly rational, furnishing the key to the highest wisdom. And what was the result arrived at? To us, indeed, it must appear ridiculous and insignificant, compared with the vast amount of learning spent upon it. Yet to Reuchlin it was a matter of grave and serious importance, to prove that the casual remarks made in the Talmud about the twelve and forty-two letters composing the name of the Lord were designed to teach the mysterious doctrine of the Trinity. He also applied the puerilities of the Cabbalists of the Abulufian school to the Christian symbolism of the cross, wood and image; these words in the original Hebrew having each the same numerical value—the letters in Eiz and Zelem (cross or image and wood) being respectively equal to 160. Hence, Reuchlin intars, the miraculous efficiency of the cross and sign of the cross with which the first Emperor, Constantine, gained so many victories. The Jewish Cabbalist, of Frankfurt, is thus represented speaking more and more, as the dialogue approaches the close, the language of Christianity; as if Judaism had become reconciled with the latter through the medium of the Cabbalah, and thus put an end to the long continued discord between the two.

Reuchlin, in thus lending aid from an unexpected source to the now tottering edifice of Catholicism, must have had an eye solely to the favor of the pope to whom he dedicated the work. He therein expressed the hope that Leo X. would finally decide the controversy between him and the Dominicans, and relieve him from all anxiety and doubt, since, though the case was dismissed for the present, the Dominicans were still zealously agitating the same. He did not fail at the same time to call the pope's attention to the fact, that his adversaries had the impudence to prescribe laws

for the Vatican. He hoped the Cabbala, with her Christian form and color, would plead in his favor before the papal chair.—In fact, Reuchlin was not alone in his affected love for the mysticism of the Cabbala. Not only cardinals, but the pope himself expected to realize much good in behalf of Christianity from a study of that mystic philosophy. Hence, also, before they were yet aware of the fact that Reuchlin himself was engaged in a work on the Cabbala, they urged the Franciscan *Petrus Galatinus* of Rome, who had some knowledge of the subject, to publish a Cabbalistic work in favor of Reuchlin. Galatinus, the Franciscan, being as such an opponent of the Dominicans, was glad to comply with their request, and compiled a comprehensive but bungling manual, called: "The Mysteries of the Catholic Truth." It is written in the form of a colloquy between Reuchlin, Hoogstraten and the author on the Mysteries of Christianity, which it is intended to confirm by proofs taken from the Talmud—proofs, overlooked only by the "blind Jews." The Hebrew Grammarian, *Elia Levita*, who then resided in Rome, and was on intimate terms with the cardinal Egidio de Viterbo, one of the Christian votaries of the Cabbala, appears to have assisted Galatinus in the composition of the work. For, this Franciscan quoted passages from the mystical book of the *Zohar*—a book, which no Christian could understand without the aid of a learned Hebrew. The entire work consists of a collection of nauseating sweepings gleaned from Jewish and Christian writings, without method or coherence, designed to show what an advantage it is to the Christian community, if a Christian theologian is acquainted with the writings of the Jews, enabling him to learn so many mysteries of great value for the better understanding of Catholicism. By this means they could also most decisively refute the unbelief of the present Jews (those of ancient times being supposed to have been orthodox Christians at heart,) that they would not dare open their mouth, their words only confirming the Catholic truth. Futile and insipid as this Christianizing Cabbala was, it nevertheless became, through the patronage of Reuchlin, the fashion of the day. Some of the enlightened Humanists even, whose critical acumen was not altogether faultless, were drawn into this Cabbalistic vortex. Even the proud privy counsellor and patrician, Pirkheimer in Nuremberg, the learned admirer of the Classics, the spiritual father, as it were, of the Humanists, exhibited much enthusiasm in the study of the Cabbala, striving to digest its indigestible formulas. "If the Dominicans and theologians," said he in a letter dated Aug. 28, 1517, "instead of cutting with their loquacious tongue as with a sharp sword, instead of indolently and impudently uttering stale and stupid things—if instead of this they were like Reuchlin and Paul Riccio, to search for the doctrines hidden in the Cabbala and

Talmud, their conduct would indeed be far more laudable. They could then speak about the 'thirty-two paths' of wisdom and the mysteries of the Divine Name, the Law and the Synagogue, of the ten great seals of God, the transposition of letters, and explain the opinions of the Cabbalists on the birth of the Virgin, the incarnation of the son of God, his death and resurrection, the conversion of the bread and wine in the eucharist, &c." . . . Hoogstraten alone kept aloof from this strange infatuation. Whether from profound insight or instinctive sagacity he decried the Cabbala, we can not say with certainty; his antagonism to Reuchlin, no doubt, whetted his mental perceptions. Suffice it, however, to know, that, in a work published soon afterward (1519), he maintained that the Cabbala was hostile to Christianity and contained teachings of infidelity.

SECTION XXII.

The interest attaching to the Reuchlinian controversy was beginning to grow lukewarm, when a new movement loomed up in Germany, continuing the work for which that controversy had paved the way, shaking the strong pillars of papacy and the Catholic Church to its very center, and ushering into existence an entire renovation of European affairs. The great Reformation, begun by *Luther*, found the public already prepared for bold, independent thought by the discussions relative to the character of the Talmud and its adversaries. It was to this current of public opinion that Luther's reform movements were indebted for their origin and rapid development. Like many other great historical events, the Reformation, too, the influence of whose strength was soon felt by all Christendom, arose from apparently small, trifling beginnings, needing a powerful support at the very outset, or else it would have been suffocated in its germ.

Martin Luther—born 1483, died 1546—possessed a vigorous, uncouth, stubborn and passionate character, tenaciously adhering to convictions and errors when once embraced. This character of his was pervaded by a strong, religious spirit, sincere devotion to God and the requirements of faith—a spirit and devotion unparalleled at the time, controlling him not merely on the impulse of the moment, but guiding and directing him in all the relations of life, compared with which every thing else appeared to him vain and insignificant.

Luther was unquestionably the most pious and faithful man of his age within the pale of Christianity. He was also distinguished for spotless conduct and true humility. His ardent zeal in the cause of religion bore a strong resemblance to that of the Apostle Paul. This, too, accounts for his special fondness for the apostolic Epistles of the latter. The doctrine of justification by faith, wherein Paul teaches, in opposition to the Jewish doctrines of his time, that the salvation of man depends not on

religious works, nor on virtue and morality, but solely and entirely on the unconditional belief in the messianic character of Jesus—this doctrine Luther made peculiarly his own, cherished it silently in his bosom, and without suspecting it, found himself all at once in direct opposition to the entire system of the Church with her sacraments, indulgences, the mass and the store of papal dispensation and grace. The monk of Eisleben applied the same one-sided mode of reasoning against the ordinances of the Church, as the apostle of Tarsus did against the laws of the Synagogue. When in Rome he beheld with his own eyes the thorough corruption of the Church and the unbelief of the clergy. But much as he was grieved at the sight of this corruption, his blind, monastic faith in the divinity of the Catholic Church and the infallibility of the Pope was not in the least diminished. As the Apostle Paul was at first a rigidly orthodox believer in the Law, and in his passionate zeal persecuted the first Christian congregation, so Luther was at first an ardent admirer of papacy, bitterly opposed to those who questioned its infallibility. "I was once," he remarked, "a monk, a fanatic papist, so intoxicated with the dogmas of popery, that I would have been prepared, if authorized, to kill any and every one that uttered but a syllable against the obedience due to the Pope." And yet this thorough, full-blooded strong-headed monk was selected by Providence to perform the work of liberation from the tyranny and corruption of popedom and the Middle Age in general. But it took considerable time before the scales fell from the eyes of his stubborn head.

The first occasion of a change was presented by the traffic in indulgences. In the archbishopric of Mayence three bishops had within a short space of time been elected, every one of whom, on entering upon his office, was bound to contribute 20,000 florins pall-money to the papal exchequer in Rome. The third of these, however, the Elector Albrecht, was no more able to raise the sum required in his own diocese, the inhabitants thereof having been utterly impoverished by the avarice of the Church, while on account of the several expulsions there were no rich Jews to be found. He was, therefore, obliged to furnish the amount from his own means, or rather to borrow the same from the *Ruggers*—the money-princes of Augsburg. To indemnify the bishop, Pope Leo promised to give him a share of the money realized from the sale of indulgences, which he fraudulently pretended to be for the benefit of the church of St. Peter. The most important business of the ecclesiastical rulers of the time was to raise money. Archbishop Albrecht therefore permitted the sale of indulgences in his diocese, while the Elector of Saxony prohibited the same in his dominion. But why? Simply to prevent the money being exported from the country. The Franciscans were not disposed to engage in the traffic with indulgences, but left the busi-

ness altogether in the hands of the Dominican Order, most of whose members had no scruples whatever against engaging in that disgraceful traffic.

The Dominican monk, *John Tetzel*, the most audacious of the impudent monks—he whom the Emperor Maximilian had once condemned to be drowned in the Inn for his criminal conduct—undertook the sale of indulgences for the district of Mayence, exaggerating in public their great value in regular mountebank style, in order to realize the greatest possible amount of money. He offered absolution from sin in the name of the Pope, who, he said, possessed more power than all the saints, apostles, angels, ay, even the Virgin Mary! Jesus having renounced all authority till the great day of judgment and conferred it upon his Vicar on earth who was therefore competent to effect any and every thing on earth and in heaven. Whoever would buy a letter of indulgence could get rid of all his sins and even redeem souls from purgatory, without even being obliged to feel any sentiments of repentance and condition. As soon as the coin would go down his money-box with a ringing noise, the redeemed soul would go up to heaven. Even he who offended the Mother of God could receive pardon by purchasing a letter of indulgence. Whoever entered into the bonds of an incestuous marriage, could thereby receive dispensation. Nay, more, even for future transgressions pardon might be procured by contributing to the building of St. Peter's. In short, Tetzel's offer was on appeal for the basest passions to commit all sorts of sins and crimes for a pecuniary consideration. The preachers of the day were directed to exalt from the pulpit the excellency of the traffic in indulgences. Whenever the vender of these indulgences, with the papal bull upon a cushion of velvet or gold brocade, entered a city, he was welcomed by a motley array of priests, monks, city councilors, school-boys and all classes of citizens, with songs and banners and the ringing of bells.

Many a man, indeed, took umbrage at this daring subversion of all social order, this inducement to sin and crime, offered under the sanction of religion; but no one felt himself so outraged as Martin Luther. He was indignant, not so much on the ground of the moral impropriety of the proceeding, as on the ground of his conception of Christianity; according to which no man, not even a saint—to say nothing of a Pope—possessed such a great stock of merits, as to have more than is necessary for his own justification before God, and therefore no man was able, from the surplus of his own merits, to relieve others of the burden of sin. When, therefore, he beheld his fellow-prisoners thronging to the neighboring cities to the monastery of Tetzel—competition prevented this notorious vender of indulgences from coming to Wittenberg—and on their return leading a sinful life on account of the absolution obtained, Luther resolutely deter-

mined to stop this abuse of religion, preached against it, and posted to the doors of his church his celebrated ninety-five theses against the sale of indulgences, binding himself to demonstrate the perverse and unchristian character of the same (Oct. 31, 1517). In less than a fortnight his opposition to Tetzel's shameless proceedings became known throughout Germany. The rapid spread of this news and the interest it elicited is to be accounted for by the fact that public opinion had been already prepared by the agitation raised by Pfefferkorn against the Talmud, and by the difficulties between Reuchlin and the Dominican inquisitor Hoogstraten. Through these the Dominicans were rendered so odious in public estimation, that not merely persons of rank, but the flower of the people took sides against superstition and popish fraud. Reuchlin, by his defence of the Talmud, had against his will become the Elijah of Luther; had he not been his fore-runner, the opposition of Luther to Tetzel's arrogant bearing would have been stifled at the very outset. Luther himself, in a letter to Reuchlin, written in December 1518, acknowledged that the latter, by his defence of the Talmud and consequent conflict with the Dominicans, had become the chosen "instrument of divine Providence" (*organum consilii divini*). Even as it was, the loud protest of Luther at first met with but silent applause. The Germans of that day, like those of the present, were not quick in taking active steps boldly to defend and maintain their newly acquired convictions; and had it not been for the regular system of persecution which the Dominicans organized against Luther, as they did in the cause of Reuchlin, the Reformation would have been silenced to death in his germ. However, not only Tetzel, the monk whose character was attacked, and another wrangler, by the name of Dr. *Johann Eck* in Ingolstadt, who for some time had joined in the cry with the Humanists, but also the Cardinal *Prierias*, Reuchlin's opponent, more especially the indefatigable Hoogstraten, and lastly the banking house of the *Fuggers* who had loaned their funds for the sinful wages of the clergy—all these stimulated that papal authorities to take action against Luther. Leo the Tenth, who at first looked upon these fresh difficulties in Germany with proud indifference, regarding them as mere monk's squabbles, was at length urged to issue a bull in which he approved of the doctrine of indulgences in the crude, demoralizing sense of the Dominicans. This very step only served to promote the cause of the Reformation. The resolute mind of Luther was gradually led to the conviction that the Pope, and papacy in general, was not infallible, and that the foundation of faith was not the will of the Vatican, but the Word of Scripture. It required some time yet before he could grasp the idea, that the Pope was the Anti-Christ, and the Roman Church with her ordinances and moral corruption the enemy of Christianity.

He came very near even giving up his cause and admonishing the faithful again to pay implicit obedience to the Holy See of Rome (January, 1519). But the events that had transpired were mightier than the will of the original author himself. The vehemence of the ignorant bigots on the one hand, as well as the activity of the Humanists—particularly the fiery genius Hutten—on the other, pushed matters so far as to result in an open decisive rupture.

The death of the aged Emperor Maximilian, who died without being able to put an end to the theological disputes which he had himself called forth, and the choice of a new Emperor, which was protracted for six months, caused politics to be strangely commingled with religion; thereby creating a confusion, in which the friends and enemies of the liberal tendency in religion or of the narrow orthodox creed could no longer be distinguished from one another. Hutten and the Humanists were for the choice of Charles V., notwithstanding that in his principal country, Spain, the Dominicans had full sway and the flames of the Inquisition were perpetually burning. The Vatican, on the other hand, was against this choice. The cause of Reuchlin and Luther—the Talmud and the Reformation—became daily more and more intermingled. It had come so far, that the Electors of Germany, when assembled for the purpose of electing an Emperor, declared most positively in favor of Reuchlin, and against the persecuting partizans of Cologne. Hutten, who never gave up a cause he had once espoused, but pitilessly tore the purple bandage from the festering sores of the Roman court, exposing them in all their ghastliness, so prepossessed the outlawed knight, *Franz von Sickingen*, in favor of Reuchlin and Luther, that he invited both to stay in his strong castle, promising to protect them against their enemies. What neither the Pope nor the Emperor ventured to do against the Dominicans, was boldly undertaken by Sickingen. He, in connection with the Dahlbergs and other knights, declared war against the Provincial and the Convent of the Dominican Order (July 26, 1519,) if Hoogstraten would not comply with the sentence passed by the tribunal of spire and pay him the one hundred and eleven gold florins cost, and give sureties that he would abstain in the future from persecuting him. The sagacious friars knew full well that this knight was not to be trifled with, and that his word could not be evaded like that of the Pope or Emperor. They resorted, indeed, to all kinds of subtleties and equivocations, appealing to Reuchlin's mild disposition, but the latter showed himself brave and determined this time, referring them to Sickingen, who, however, insisted upon their compliance with his command. Thus the Dominicans were compelled to yield ignominiously. The stiff-necked Hoogstraten was divested of his authority as Prior and Inquisitor; and the Provincial, *Everard von Cleve*, and the entire Convent of the Order

were compelled, utterly ignoring Hoogstraten, to petition the Pope (May 10, 1520) to dismiss and suppress for ever the case in dispute, out of regard to Reuchlin's "learning, purity of character, and sincerity in religion." Instead of condemning the Talmud, the Pope even encouraged some enterprising publishers to print the same. Thus, by a movement that appeared inexplicable at the time, what was least expected took place—namely, Reuchlin was justified; the Talmud, too, was justified and, in a measure, approved by the Vatican. And, in fact, in the very same year, a rich, high-minded Christian, publisher of Antwerp, Daniel Bomberg, issued a complete edition of the *Babylonian Talmud* with commentaries, in twelve folios—the model of all subsequent editions—whereas, previous to this, only a few special treatises had been printed by Gerson Soncin. Leo X. granted the publishers of this edition of the Talmud the privileges of copy-right. A few years afterward, Bomberg published the *Jerusalem Talmud* (ca. 1523). He engaged several learned Hebrews to assist him in this edition, and is said to have invested more than four million ducats in printing Hebrew works. The Dominicans were discomfited at every point. Hoogstraten was forced to pay Reuchlin the costs of the trial, one hundred and eleven gold florins, which were of great service to the now impoverished imperial counsellor; he having been so reduced, that he was obliged to sell his farm, from which he derived the means of subsistence for himself and family, and even to raise a loan. He had become a martyr to his upright heart and to the vain conceit that the Talmud contained Cabbalistical elements, bearing testimony to the truth of Christianity. In his old age the life of poor Reuchlin was much embittered, with no joy to the end of his days. Though esteemed by friends and princes, he was obliged to leave his native city, and live amidst strangers. The rage of the papists against Luther's ever-increasing boldness was turned against Reuchlin also; though he, by no means, sympathized with that great reformer, and even withdrew the legacy he had intended to bequeath to his great nephew and favorite, *Melanchthon*, because of the latter's participation in the Reformation.

SECTION XXIII.

At length, in June 1520, provoked by opposition, the Augustine monk of Wittenberg openly declared his hostility to the abuses of the Catholic Church, in his work; "To the Christian nobility of the German Nation, concerning the amelioration of the Christian classes." In this book Luther summed up all the abominable features of the Church, which had been exposed in pamphlets by the "Young Germany" of that day, and more especially by Hutten; but in addition to this, he presented the religious side of the subject, quoting the Scriptures to show that the entire ecclesias-

tical regime, was diametrically opposed to the original Word of God. He did not as yet advocate the abolition of the Holy See; but he reduced the Pope simply to the rank of a superior bishop. The rules as well as the people, applauded this bold, reformatory production of Luther the more especially, as it advocated the right, on the point of the temporal princes, to exercise a control over the Church and the clergy. In Rome meanwhile the advocates of ignorance, the Dominican party, the fanatical cardinal Sylvester Prierias, as well as the Fuggers, —those money-princes of the time, who had suffered pecuniary losses on account of the indignation roused against the traffic in indulgences—so worked upon Pope Leo, who was opposed to violent measures, as to influence him to issue a bull of condemnation against Luther and his adherents, including the Humanist, Willibald Pirckheimer—June 15. At the same time Reuchlin's *Occular Mirror*, contrary to a previous declaration, was condemned in Rome. The bigoted, unprincipled ignoramuses, whose existence depended on public stupidity and servility, had greatly importuned the Pope, censuring him for his leniency. Had he, they declared, on a former occasion sternly put a stop to the bold utterances of Reuchlin, Luther would not have dared to speak so defiantly against the Catholic Church. They even went so far as to maintain, that the Pope was wrong in not condemning Reuchlin as a heretic and sentencing him to the flames at once.

But the thunders of excommunication hurled against Luther and Reuchlin were no more attended with those awe-inspiring consequences which characterized papal bulls before. People began to have little faith in their efficacy. The anathemas of the Pope was placarded in but few German cities; in most cities it was not permitted to make its appearance at all, which in many it was torn down, and the bearer of it, the drunken Dr. Eck, of Ingolstadt, barely escaped with his life. The consequence was, that Luther formally and completely renounced popery, by publicly burning the papal bull (Dec. 10, 1520). From that day dates the formal rupture between Catholicism and that new Church which was now in a state of ferment, without having as yet received a definite name. So little regard was paid to the authority of the Pope that the princes assembled at the Diet of Worms invited the great Reformer of Wittenberg, condemned though he was by the Holy See of Rome as a heretic and subject to be consigned to the flames, to lay before them the grounds and motives of his antagonism to the established Church. Like a triumphant hero Luther passed through the several cities on his way to the German Diet. Every where the people welcomed him with public addresses and other demonstrations of joy. But it was exceedingly fortunate for Luther—and herein we behold the special designs of Providence—that the young King of Spain, Charles V., though he was the

patron of the inquisitorial Dominicans in his Spanish dominions, and would fain have exterminated every germ and root of religious innovations, was under the necessity of employing the aid of this very Reform movement, in order to hold in check the Pope upon the political chessboard. But for this political emergency, Luther would hardly have found any protectors, excepting Hutten and a few knights. Such, moreover, was the favorable condition of affairs, that in its incipient stage the Reformation could be successfully carried with the aid of the word; as yet no recourse to the sword was necessary. But that the word at that time could become as potent as any material weapon, was the result of Pfefferkorn's fierce onslaught on the Talmud.

This arrant knave had been utterly lost sight of in the universal conflagration which his insignificant fire-brand against the literature of the Jews had kindled. Not content with his inferior position in the remote background, he determined to resuscitate his notoriety in the public mind by a new act of impudent daring. He was still the *protege* of the Dominicans of Cologne—their prior, Hoogstraten, having been re-instated in his dignity—still occupied his post as superintendent of the city hospital. He had, moreover, a full-grown son, who was preparing for the clerical profession. And now, in March 1521, after an interval of five years, either at the instigation of his protectors or from his own spontaneous desire to obliterate the stigma which through him would attach to his offsprings, he sent forth fresh libel against Reuchlin, entitled: "A piteous Lament over all Lamentations." He dedicated this scurrilous pamphlet to the young Emperor Charles. Though, from the character of Pfefferkorn, the public were prepared to hear all sorts of vulgarities; they were not a little surprised at the vulgar expressions and caricatures abounding in this, his last execrable production. In one of the woodcuts Reuchlin appears quartered and hanged, with some obscene lines written underneath. Reuchlin, the author tells us, deserved to be hacked in four pieces and exposed in all the royal highways. From this book one may imagine what would have been the fate of Reuchlin, the Humanists and their Jewish *proteges*, if Pfefferkorn and his Dominican crew had won the victory. Reuchlin, the venerable sire, who was already on the verge of the tomb, is here treated as an abandoned wretch—an outcast. The vilest epithets, the most approbrious expressions—such as "Master of falsehoods, blasphemer of the Church, seducer of the Christians, protector of the Jews, forger of Scriptural texts," and the like—are applied to him. Sodom and Gomorrah are said to have contained no malefactor so base as Reuchlin. The design of the author was, of course, to incite the young Emperor against Reuchlin and the Jews. He calls attention to the fact, that Reuchlin's conduct was the cause of so many errors and heresies prevailing, there-

by strengthening the false, faithless Jews and other infidels in their wicked designs. As a specimen of his impudent language, we quote the following: "Do you suppose," exclaims the villifier, "that we are now so much taken up with Martin Luther, that we shall lose sight of you? No; I tell you, Reuchlin, and you may believe me, you shall not be forgotten!"—In a similar strain he goes on repeating all his former calumnies against Reuchlin, reiterating among others the charge that the Jews bribed Reuchlin in the sum of 1,000 ducats to defend them. But once he tells the truth; and that when he says: "If the Pope had done so eight years ago (condemned the 'Ocular Mirror of Reuchlin'), neither Martin Luther nor any of your younger *obscuro virorum* would have dared to do or utter what they now so publicly do to the detriment of the Christian faith. You (i. e.; Reuchlin) are the instigator of all their agitations—you are the cause of the errors and superstitions introduced into the holy Church."—He declares himself, furthermore, ready to debate with Reuchlin, publicly before the Diet of Worms, on the subject of Christianity.

That the writer availed himself of the opportunity to vilify the Jews, may be easily imagined. He would not be Pfefferkorn, if he did not do so. He slanders them again with all the hackneyed charges of old. They deride Jesus and the Church in their writings and prayers; they torture and murder Christian children, and abuse sacred wafers. He does not wish to deal unjustly with the Jews; all he asks is, that they be not permitted to loan money on interest, not to remain in possession of their Hebrew works, and that they be compelled to visit the churches and listen to Christian sermons, to engage in hard, manual labor—such as sweeping streets and chimneys, cleaning privies, carrying bricks and stones, burning lime and coal, treading clay, gathering rags, &c. Finally, he declares that it has ever been his ardent wish and most fervent prayer that the three largest Jewish congregations of Germany—to-wit, those of Frankfort, Worms and Ratisbon—might be banished, and that he thanks God that he has lived to see the happy fulfilment of his prayer so far, at least, as the last named city was concerned.

The Jews of Ratisbon had, in fact, been ignominiously driven from the city of Ratisbon two years ago. This city, once so prominent and flourishing, had, by municipal mismanagement and stupidity, lost its prestige, and was now far surpassed by her two neighboring rivals, Augsburg and Nuremberg. But, though devoid of the means requisite for the purpose, she still wished to strut in all the array of a grand Metropolitan city, and attributed her decline to the fact of her containing so many inhabitants of the Jewish persuasion. In consequence of this, the Christian and Jewish population came into continual collision. The laborers declared that the Jews deprive them of the very morsel of their daily sustenance. The Christian physicians

and surgeons complained that all classes, clerical and secular, rich and poor, citizens and strangers, applied to Jews only for medical aid. This complaint, no doubt, was not unfounded; but their own incapacity alone was to blame for the want of public confidence in their treatment. The Jewish inhabitants, on the other hand, complained of being oppressed, persecuted, and annoyed, in all sorts and ways. The Emperor Maximilian was, in consequence, so importuned with complaints from both parties, that he ordered the officers of his realm in Insbruck to give both parties a public hearing, and endeavor to compare their differences. Accordingly, the two parties sent delegates to Insbruck; the citizens sending two, and the Jews three, with their counsel, Dr. Zasius. The former insisted upon banishing the Jews at once. The Emperor, who, as Archduke of Austria, derived double taxes from the Jews, would not consent to this. No definite action was, therefore, taken on the subject, but the case, as was customary in those days, was indefinitely postponed. In the mean time, the Dominicans and Franciscans, particularly an impulsive disciple of Dr. Eck, the fanatic pastor of the cathedral, Balthasar Hubmaier, who was subsequently burned for being an anabaptist, inflamed the passions of the people to incite them to mob the Jews of Ratisbon. The clergy pretended to have obtained a bull from Pope Leo X, for the sum of three hundred ducats, it was said, advanced by the banking-house of the Fuggers—in which all usury was prohibited. The Bishop of Johann thereupon caused a notice to be posted on all church-doors to the effect, that all suits brought by Jews for enforcing the payment of debts were to be disregarded, in case any interest had been charged. About the same time, also, it happened that two Jewish youths, of a rich family, made some indiscreet remarks about Hubmaier, and, being mocked and derided by two Christian boys, were about to throw stones at the windows of the prebendary's. This, now, was considered a capital crime. The two youths were bound with ropes and kept six days in prison. This gave rise to fresh complaints, on the part of the Jews, against the clergy and municipality; which, again, resulted in fresh but impotent interpositions on the part of the government at Insbruck. The Bishop, having been called to an account, denied that any incendiary sermons had been delivered against the Jews.

The Jews, however, had gained over to their side a Christian, who faithfully reported to them all the incendiary appeals made against them from the pulpit; thereby rendering it impossible officially to deny a fact patent to the community at large. Thereupon they brought fresh complaints, particularly against Balthasar Hubmaier. At this the Emperor Maximilian was so provoked, that he sent a special messenger to the municipal Council of Ratisbon, to make known to them his imperial indignation,

and to have them understand that he would not suffer the Jews under the protection of Austria to be maltreated, and that they should banish from the city the incendiary preacher of the cathedral. So unexpected was this imperial order, that the monks asserted, the German Jews had thronged from all parts of the Empire to the Emperor at Augsburg, to avert the calamity threatening the old and venerable congregation of Ratisbon, and had given the Sovereign Ruler of the German Empire more than twelve thousand gold florins to bribe him in their behalf. It was indeed no small thing which the Emperor enjoined upon the clergy of Ratisbon, he having commanded them to deliver up the alleged bull from the Pope, prohibiting the taking of interest. He ordered them to post a notice on all church-doors to the effect, that any debtor, refusing to liquidate his indebtedness on the ground of that bull, would be held responsible by the Emperor, and be punished for disobedience. The Bishop of Ratisbon was cowardly enough to comply in every respect with the demands of the Emperor, revoking every thing he had said and done against the Jews, and delivering up the Papal bull. Hubmaier, too, was expelled from the city, and was only allowed to return on condition of not preaching against the Jews. But this only exasperated the clergy still more against the Jews. The citizens, too, annoyed them still more in various ways, in order to curb and humble them. The most innocent things on the part of the Jews were imputed to them as crimes. Thus, among other things, they were reproached with acting in a manner unbecoming their station, because they were dressed according to the fashion, in beautiful caps and velvet waistcoats; or because they were not unfrequently riding out upon tall horses, with spears, crossbows and halberds. These were crimes which the Christian preachers denounced from the pulpit. These things, of course, could only have happened in the Jewish quarter of the town; for the moment a Jew appeared in the Christian precincts of the city, without wearing on his dress the mark to distinguish him from a Christian, he was forthwith subject to a heavy penalty. In this way complaints and counter-complaints were being protracted for a long time, until the death of the Emperor Maximilian, on the 12th of January, 1519, brought about a decisive, but, to the Jews, unhappy change.

As soon as the Emperor's death was made public, the delegates of Ratisbon, who were exerting their influence in Insbruck to effect the expulsion of the Jews, hastened home with the joyous satisfaction, that, now the Emperor was dead, the case would be decided in their favor. In the City Hall, in the beer-saloons, in the guilds and clubs of the town; everywhere it was determined upon taking advantage of the interregnum in the Empire, to effect the immediate expulsion of the Jewish inhabitants.

The Dominican and Franciscan preachers, particularly Hübmayr, had already prepared the mind of the public for the desired object. The city council took the matter into consideration; desiring, however, after the regular German fashion of legal procedure, to justify the outrageous injustice by the forms of law, they resolved to intrust the clergy, the original instigators of the movement, with the execution thereof. But the bishop and the Chapter, though eager for the task, hesitated to accomplish it. They had been too much intimidated before by the Emperor. Finally, after considerable debate, it was resolved—February 1519—to take vigorous and energetic steps to expel the Jews, but to keep their resolve secret until the day of expulsion. The Jews, indeed, having any how received information of the imminent calamity, hastened to send deputies to the imperial government at Innsbruck, in order to obtain protection. But it was too late. The entire Christian community had already agreed upon a plan, and began to take the initiatory steps for executing the same. The workmen appeared *en masse* before the city hall, on the 21st of February, 1519, and clamorously demanded a hearing. Their spokesman boisterously represented that the city had been reduced to poverty and ruin solely and entirely by the Jews. All trade was in their hands. They had bought up all kinds of grain for export; they had appropriated the entire traffic in wine from Swabia and in iron from the hammer-smiths. Through them, he furthermore declared, the city had lost 132,000 guilders during the last forty years. Now, then, the time had come to get rid of these accursed Jews; and if the council would not order their expulsion, they (the working populace) would take the matter into their hands. All this of course, was but the first step of a preconceived plan. The city councillors only needed a pretext for action; and the clamorous demands of the mob afforded a most favorable one. They pretended to be morally driven to the act of expulsion, since otherwise the lives of the Jews would have been imperilled; their expulsion, then, was for their own safety. The council retired, apparently to deliberate, and a few moments thereafter returned, informing the workmen that their wishes should be complied with. The members of the council thereupon proceeded forthwith to the Jewish quarter of the city, notifying the inhabitants that it was not possible to protect them any longer, and that they must consequently leave the city within five days. They were to be permitted to take their property along, but give up what they possessed in pawn from Christians, to satisfy such claims of indebtedness as might be made against them. The "Synagogue of the devil," as it was termed in the confused phraseology of the times, was to be vacated within the short space of two hours, as it was to be razed to the ground forthwith, to give way to a church to be erected on the same spot. The distress of

the Jewish population, numbering about 500 souls, was indescribable; but it could not soften the hardened hearts of the brutal citizens of Ratisbon. All that was granted to the unfortunate beings, was a reprieve of three days (to the end of February). Their outstanding debts were bought by the city for the round sum of 6,000 guilders. They were not able, however, to dispose of their property, the Jewish quarter being so closely guarded as to prevent the ingress of Christians desirous of making purchases. The Jews were, therefore, obliged to submit to their inevitable doom, and leave the city which they had inhabited ever since its foundation, and with whose citizens they had formerly been on the most intimate terms—the city which protected them even during the great plague ("black death"), when a general massacre of the Jews took place all over Germany. No pity was shown to the exiled; the feeble and the sick were compelled to leave with the rest, and many of them died even on the way to the banks of the Danube, where they were to embark in search of places of refuge.

The Jews had not yet departed, when the citizens proceeded to demolish the splendid Synagogue with its massive pillars, and erect a church in its place. Their object was to make their occupation of the Jewish quarter an "accomplished fact," so that it might not be undone even by the authority of the Emperor about to be elected. No sooner, therefore, had the Jews with elegiac songs removed the sacred utensils of their "Miniature Temple," than the masons and stone-cutters began the work of demolition. In this, as well as in the erection of the church on the site of the ruins, the fanatic spirit of the day manifested itself in all its hideous and repulsive features—a spirit, the more odious, when we consider that it was not even frank and sincere, but artificially fanned by the higher classes, in order to make the expulsion of the Jews irrevocable. For, not only men, women and maidens—not merely the sex of holy simplicity that thronged thither for the purpose from the country, and not merely monks and friars of different orders engaged in the work, but even the most distinguished officers of the city, the vicar-general and the bishop, as being the administrator, applied their own hands to the work. Four thousand individuals are said to have vied with one another in performing the "sacred" task, every one congratulating himself, if he only contributed a single stone to the structure. With the utmost haste they erected a cross therein, and in less than four weeks after the expulsion of the Jews, on the 25th of March, worshipped on the spot so long consecrated by Jewish prayers.

The citizens of Ratisbon continued, however, for some time exceedingly uneasy on account of the violent measures they had carried out against the Jews, not knowing whether the dukes of Bavaria and the imperial house of Austria would approve or condemn their conduct. As to the dukes

of Bavaria, the bigoted duchess and abbess *Kunigunde*, who had so zealously supported Pfefferkorn and the Dominicans, easily assuaged their indignation. But the Austrian government at Innsbruck sternly insisted upon the complete re-admission of the Jews into the city of Ratisbon and their indemnification, not indeed for their own sake, but on account of the revenues of which their expulsion had deprived the house of Austria. The differences between the citizens of Ratisbon and the Jews continued for a long time to agitate the realm, without being definitely settled. At length the subject was brought into the Diet of Worms, and laid before the young Emperor Charles V. (1521). Jewish delegates were present with well-filled purses, still sanguine of being able, despite their Christian enemies, to effect the restoration of their constituents to Ratisbon. But their hopes were doomed to disappointment. The Emperor, as the supreme head of the imperial house of Austria, came to an understanding, at last, with the commonalty of Ratisbon. They were, indeed, no more to be forced to admit Jews into their city; but they were henceforth to surrender the last remnant of municipal freedom, and be subject to a strict and thorough dependence upon the general government. They were, besides, to indemnify the banished Jews for the loss of their houses, and assure them that the graves of their fathers should be spared and their earthly remains suffered to rest in peace. But, as appears from the municipal Chronicles of that day, by the time this arrangement had been completed, over 4,000 tomb-stones of the time honored cemetery of the Jews in Ratisbon had been already demolished by the callous arms of men from the country, as also by the tender hands of fanaticized young women.

With diabolical joy and gratification Pfefferkorn delighted in the misery and distress of the expelled Jews of Ratisbon, enumerating with marked satisfaction the several cities of Germany from which his former coreligionists had been already expelled—viz: *Cologne, Augsburg, Strasburg, Nuremberg, Nordlingen, Spire, Esslingen, Reutlingen and Colmar*. And now, in his last villifying production, he exhorted the burgo-master, council and citizens generally of Frankfort and Worms, which contained the only remaining Jewish Congregations of considerable magnitude—in Worms there existed a theological seminary with eighty students of the Talmud—to follow the "good example" set by the cities aforementioned and, for the sake of Christ, desist from deriving pecuniary benefits from the Jews by allowing them to remain. They need not, he thought, fear any opposition from the young Emperor, the latter being himself unfavorably disposed to the Jews. But, he advised them, they should go to work as energetically and speedily as the citizens of Ratisbon had done, and proceed at once to demolish, raze to the ground and obliterate the synagogues, and erect chapels and cloisters in their stead. As to the property

of the Jews, they need have no scruples in taking that; they were perfectly entitled to do so, in accordance with the law of God and man.

The "Lament over all Lamentations"—this last libel of Pfefferkorn's venomous pen exerted no influence at the time, neither against the Jews nor against Reuchlin. The Congregations of Frankfort and Worms were not expelled then; nor did Reuchlin's fame suffer any detraction in the last years of his life. Reuchlin even received additional marks of distinction and honor. The University of Tübingen earnestly solicited him to take a professor's chair in that celebrated institution of learning. He could now, without restraint from any part, deliver lectures on the Hebrew language before large audiences of students,—many of whom eagerly came thither from the University of Heidelberg—whereas formerly, previous to the controversy with the Dominicans, he could only do so in private, before a few, select hearers. So great was the change which public opinion had undergone within a comparatively short interval. Had Pfefferkorn possessed a keen perception of this revolution in sentiment, he would, no doubt, have despised himself as an incendiary, who, from motives of revenge or native malice, had applied the torch to an edifice decayed and on the point of crumbling into ruins, while from its ashes rose phoenix-like, a new, more beautiful and more spacious structure. His Balaam's curse had turned a blessing. The name of Pfefferkorn, after the appearance of his last work, sunk into oblivion; while the memory of Reuchlin has, in the course of time, been honored more and more every day. Reuchlin died, indeed, a Catholic (June 30, 1522); but, by his warm espousal of the literature of the Hebrews, he had become the first chief originator of the Reformation, and was regarded as such in his day. In that ingenious play, the "*Mute Comedy*," which appeared in less than two years after his death, he is conspicuously represented as the author of the great Protestant movement. In that comedy an actor, with his name (Reuchlin) on his back, appears on the stage, throwing down a bundle of straight and crooked twigs, and then makes his exit. Then another character (Erasmus) enters, vainly endeavoring to straighten the crooked twigs and arrange them in proper order; but, failing in the attempt, he shakes his head significantly at the sight of the chaotic confusion, and disappears. Luther then appears in monk's apparel, holding a firebrand in his hand, and sets the fagot on fire. He is followed by another actor, in imperial garb, who strikes with his sword upon the spreading flames trying to extinguish the fire, while by his action he only spreads it still more. Last of all the Pope appears; and in his eagerness to put out the fire, seizes by mistake a bucket full of oil, pours its contents into the fire, and stands agast at the bright, blazing conflagration, which it is now impossible to quench. To make

this "Mute Comedy" complete, Pfefferkorn and the Talmud should not have been missing in the scene; for these certainly furnished the *tinder*, which kindled the conflagration.

NOTE OF THE TRANSLATOR:—Here the author closes the narrative of all the facts and incidents relating to the controversy on the Talmud and its influence on the Reformation. What follows, though forming part of the same chapter (6th) in the original, is no more connected with the subject and object of the present translation; the main object of the author being to relate the history, not of the Reformation as influenced by the Jews, but of the Jews as influenced by the Reformation. However interesting, therefore, the sequel may be to the reader of Jewish history in general, the nature of the present book, as indicated by its title, calls for this seemingly abrupt close of the translation. It may not be, then, out of place here, briefly to survey the ground and course of the narrative, in order to bring clearly to view the mode in which the *Jewish* mind may be said to have influenced the bringing about of that epoch in the history of mankind—the *Protestant Reformation*.

The Protestant movement of the sixteenth century was essentially a rebellion of private judgment against public dictation—a revolution of the human mind designed to achieve the emancipation of thought from the thralldom and despotism of ecclesiastical dogmatism. This was the grand moving agency in the Reformation, though a great number of diverse events and incidents contributed more or less to the final result. Guizot in his "History of the Civilization of Europe" has shown this most clearly. Speaking of the causes of the Reformation this celebrated author remarks (Lect. XII): "It had a *general* cause, to which all others were subordinate. It was a vast effort made by the human mind to achieve its freedom. It was a new-born desire which it felt to think and judge, freely and independently, of facts and opinions which, till then, Europe received, or was considered bound to receive, from the hands of authority. It was a great endeavor to emancipate human reason; and, to call things by their right names, it was an insurrection of the human mind against the absolute power of spiritual orders. Such, in my opinion, was the true character and leading principle of the Reformation."

Now, this effort of the human mind "to think and judge, freely and independently," without being subject to the dictation of spiritual authority, received one of the greatest and strongest impulses from the long protracted controversy of Reuchlin, the harbinger of the Reformation, with that most powerful and tyrannical Order of the Church—the Dominicans. It is generally admitted that Reuchlin, more than any other Humanist of his age, paved the way to the Reform movement of Luther. But

that which, more than anything else, made him, though indirectly, the pioneer of a new era was the *post-biblical literature* of the Hebrews. The *Talmud* constituted the pivot on which turned that celebrated controversy, with all the numerous tracts and books it called forth from its advocates and adversaries. The Dominicans, as well as those opposed to enlightenment, desired to confiscate and destroy the Talmud on the ground of its alleged blasphemies against the Church. Reuchlin, who had sat at the feet of Jewish teachers and cherished a peculiar fondness for all Hebrew literature, zealously defended the Talmud and its cognate works, thereby incurring the enmity of the Dominican party. The latter, to wreak vengeance on Reuchlin, charged him with uttering heretical sentiments in his defence of the Talmud, and with leaning toward Judaism. This malignant accusation was the signal of a general rising of the friends of Reuchlin and the advocates of liberal education against the fanatic proceedings of the Dominicans and their bigoted adherents. It was then, amidst the public agitation produced by the Reuchlinian and anti-Reuchlinian parties, that the celebrated *Epistolæ Obscurorum Virorum* were published, which, with scathing sarcasm, exposed the corruption, ignorance and arrogance of the monks and friars, and, indirectly, of the higher clergy, also, holding them up to public ridicule and disgrace. These "Letters of the Unenlightened," together with other works whose publication was occasioned by the controversy in reference to the Talmud and the Jews, stimulated that courage of opinion, which dared maintain itself in spite of the intimidating measures of ecclesiastical authorities.—Throughout Germany—nay even in the capitals of France and Italy, the public mind was stirred up by the conflict of Reuchlin, the defender of the Talmud, with its vehement assailants, the Dominicans. At last, after many plots and counterplots, struggles and delays, Reuchlin came out triumphant; his defense of the Talmud, so far from being declared heretical, was approved and justified—and that, not merely by a local tribunal of the district where the case in dispute first originated, but by an Apostolic commission appointed by the Pope, to whom the case had been submitted for final judgment. So decided a triumph of private judgment over public prejudice, of secular opinion over clerical dogmatism, of liberal enlightenment over groveling ignorance, of free thought over narrow-minded bigotry—as exemplified by the triumph of Reuchlin and the Talmud over their inveterate foes—surely could not fail in encouraging a LUTHER to maintain his bold sentiments against all ecclesiastical opposition, and, in the face of all his powerful opponents, to exclaim, as he did at the Diet of Worms: "Unless I am convinced by the testimony of Sacred Scripture, or by clear, sound arguments of reason, I can not and will not recant; it being neither safe nor advisable to do

aught against conscience. *Here I stand—I can not otherwise—so help me God! Amen!*"

The Talmud, then—that important element in the history of Judaism—that vast compendium of Jewish law and tradition, which has been more or less the religious guide of Israel to this very day,—thus played a most essential part in the prelude

immediately preceding the great drama of the Reformation. It did not, indeed, appear conspicuous on the scene; but, though standing in the background, it was the modest, yet potent mainspring of all the movements preliminary to the grandest of all—the Protestant Reformation.

THE END.

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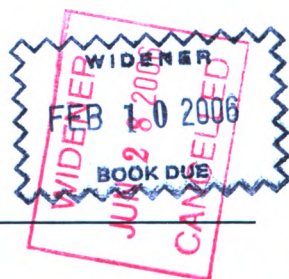


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